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Senate

The Senate met at 9:30 a.m., and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. LEAHY).

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Be merciful to us, O God. Because of Your constant love, because of Your great mercy, wipe away our sins of commission and omission. During this legislative stalemate, help our lawmakers to test all things by their own conscience, seeking to do right as You give them the ability to see it. Stir their hearts, making them bold to follow Your ways. In these days that try our souls, strengthen our weakness, replacing cynicism with faith and cowardice with courage.

We pray, in Your holy Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The President pro tempore led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

MAKING CONTINUING APPROPRIATIONS FOR FISCAL YEAR 2014

Mr. REID. Mr. President, we expect to receive the House message momentarily. I will move to table this motion when it arrives.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Chair lays before the Senate the following message from the House of Representatives, which the clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

Resolved, That the House insist on its amendment to the amendment of the Senate to the resolution (H.J. Res. 59) entitled "Joint Resolution Making Continuing Appropriations for Fiscal Year 2014, and for other purposes," and ask a conference with the Senate on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses thereon.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I move to table the motion from the House, and I ask for the yeas and nays on my motion.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Is there a sufficient second?

There is a sufficient second.

The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

The result was announced—yeas 54, nays 46, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 212 Leg.]

YEAS—54

Baldwin	Harkin	Murray
Baucus	Heinrich	Nelson
Begich	Heitkamp	Pryor
Bennet	Hirono	Reed
Blumenthal	Johnson (SD)	Reid
Boxer	Kaine	Rockefeller
Brown	King	Sanders
Cantwell	Klobuchar	Schatz
Cardin	Landrieu	Schumer
Carper	Leahy	Shaheen
Casey	Levin	Stabenow
Coons	Manchin	Tester
Donnelly	Markey	Udall (CO)
Durbin	McCaskill	Udall (NM)
Feinstein	Menendez	Warner
Franken	Merkley	Warren
Gillibrand	Mikulski	Whitehouse
Hagan	Murphy	Wyden

NAYS—46

Alexander	Crapo	Kirk
Ayotte	Cruz	Lee
Barrasso	Enzi	McCain
Blunt	Fischer	McConnell
Boozman	Flake	Moran
Burr	Graham	Murkowski
Chambliss	Grassley	Paul
Chiesa	Hatch	Portman
Coats	Heller	Risch
Coburn	Hoeven	Roberts
Cochran	Inhofe	Rubio
Collins	Isakson	Scott
Corker	Johanns	
Cornyn	Johnson (WI)	

Sessions
Shelby

Thune
Toomey

Vitter
Wicker

The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. MARKEY). The majority leader.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask this consent agreement under the background that the government is closed. All over America Federal employees were given 4 hours this morning to clear out their e-mails, computers, and close down their offices. All over America they were asked to come to work at 8 o'clock this morning, but by noon they will be out of their offices.

The government is closed because of the irrationality of what is going on on the other side of the Capitol. That is unfortunate, but that is the way it is. I will have more to say later.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that there be a period of morning business for debate only until 12:30 p.m.—one-half hour after lunch time—with the time equally divided and controlled between the two leaders or their designees, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Republican leader is recognized.

CONTINUING APPROPRIATIONS

Mr. McCONNELL. Well, Mr. President, Democratic leaders in Congress

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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finally have their prize—a government shutdown that no one seems to want but them. House Republicans worked late into the night this weekend to keep the government open, and Senate Democrats dragged their feet literally for days. They refused to pass anything. News reports suggest the majority leader was even working behind the scenes to block any bipartisan negotiations from taking place.

Then, after doing essentially nothing all weekend but obstruct, with just hours left to go, Democrats voted again and again to reject reasonable legislation. Every piece of legislation the House sent over would have kept the government from shutting down—every single one of them. Each one represented more of a compromise than the last. And get this: Last night Senate Democrats went so far as to reject legislation that would have kept the government running under just two conditions—just two—that families get the same 1-year relief as employers and that Congress has to follow the same rules on the ObamaCare exchanges as their constituents. That is how extreme the Democratic position is. They won't even accept basic fairness as a principle under ObamaCare.

Today they have gone even further. They have now said they won't even agree to sit down and work out differences. They won't even talk about it. They literally just voted against working out a compromise. They seem completely opposed to negotiation or compromise on a law that is killing jobs, driving up premiums, and driving people out of the health care plans they already have and like, and they do not even want to talk about it.

So we know the Democrats who have shut down the government will yell and point fingers. They have already started that particular routine. They will say it was the mean old Republicans or the tea party or FOX News or maybe even George W. Bush. They shut down the government, and now they are praying the American people will think somebody else is responsible. They are doing this because they would rather see the government shut down than do anything to protect the American people from the consequences of ObamaCare despite the stories we see every single day about the pain this law is causing all of our constituents.

Now, I will say this: I appreciate yesterday's bipartisan action to ensure that servicemembers currently defending us are going to be paid on time. The brave men and women who defend our country deserve no less. But now we need to do the same for the rest of the American people.

The House legislation has been perfectly reasonable. It didn't have everything Republicans wanted. It didn't have everything Democrats wanted. But it represented compromise, and it reflected the will of the American people, who don't want a government shutdown and who want to tap the brakes on ObamaCare—good folks who

just think the middle class deserves a bit of a break. Senate Democrats could have passed any one of those compromises and averted this mess. Instead, they chose to shut down the government.

Well, it is past time for Senate Democrats to listen to the American people. The House has already done its job to fund the government again and again and again.

I know the Democrats who run Washington want to extract as many political points as they can from this manufactured shutdown, but they owe our country more than that. They need to understand that ObamaCare is not ready for prime time—not ready for prime time. Their stubborn refusal to even discuss temporary relief for the middle class was a staggering act of political arrogance. So this morning I am calling on the Democrats who run the Senate to sit down with the House and negotiate, to come to a reasonable solution that cancels their shutdown and pass it because no one wants a shutdown, it seems, but our friends on the other side of the aisle.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, my friend the Republican leader spoke as if George Orwell wrote his speech. This is "1984," where up is down, down is up, east is west. All one needs to do is look at the press. We have a situation where we have a good day for the anarchists. Why? Because the government is closed. Speaker BOEHNER and his band of tea party radicals have done the unthinkable: They have shut down the Federal Government. Now, for us, that is hard to comprehend as being good. For them, they like it.

In Nevada today—7 o'clock in the morning out there—they are closing the Great Basin National Park. There will be some security folks around, but the visitor center will be closed. The Lake Mead National Recreation Area in Las Vegas where we have 600,000 people a year visit—not anymore—it will be closed. The Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area—over 1 million people go there every year. No, the visitor center will be closed.

This situation involves people who work cleaning offices, people who are security folks for our Federal buildings—they will probably be able to hang around—people who really need a job. I talked last week a little on the floor about a woman who came to my event last Thursday. She works for the National Park Service. She has worked there all of her adult life. She knows what it is like to have a government shutdown because she was there when the last one occurred. They never got that money back. She is struggling because she doesn't make that much money, and now her job is gone. It is that way all over America. And why? To extract political concessions through hostage-taking over one issue—one issue—ObamaCare.

The exchanges in Nevada kick in today. Approximately 600,000 Nevadans

will be eligible for ObamaCare. These are 600,000 people who have no health insurance. Today they can search around on the exchanges that have been developed there by a Republican Governor, and they can get a policy for as little as \$100 a month—\$100 a month—and then if they get hurt they can go see a doctor or go to a hospital and not be embarrassed because they have no money.

What the American people must understand is that the House of Representatives did not close the government. It was the Republicans in the House of Representatives who closed the government. The House of Representatives has 435 Members, but, no, they were not allowed to vote on keeping the government open; they are so fixated on ObamaCare. But that is happening all over America today, and that is one thing not being heard. The President has said it is going forward full bore, and that is welcome news for as many as 30 million people in America who have no health insurance. So Members of the House of Representatives were unable to vote to keep the government open—only the Republicans.

PATY MURRAY, who is from the State of Washington and is chair of the Budget Committee, has worked hard, leading the Senate in passing a budget. She did that 6 months ago. The budget she passed is different from the one that passed the House of Representatives.

For generations, for hundreds of years in the Congress of the United States, when there have been two separate pieces of legislation, we have gone to conference. This is something you learn about in elementary school. When the House has passed something and the Senate has passed something, what do you do? You sit down together in an open forum and work out the differences. That is how we have always done it—until the tea party took over.

Senator MURRAY has asked to go to conference 18 times. The senior Senator from Arizona has asked eight times himself. By the way, the senior Senator from Arizona is a Republican. But there has been an objection. No conference. And this has gone on for 6 months. But as the clock ticked past midnight and the Federal Government officially barred the doors and hung a "closed for business" sign out, Speaker BOEHNER demanded the very conference they have shunned us on for 6 months. This display, I would hope, would be embarrassing to House Republicans and Senate Republicans. What a deal.

So I say to the Speaker: We are happy to negotiate a budget. We have been trying to for months. And we have not only Senator MURRAY, who has been anxious to get to the budget, but we have had Senator MIKULSKI, a powerful chairman of the Appropriations Committee, who can't do anything until we get a budget. So if the House passes the piece of legislation they have over there to keep the country

functioning again, to reopen government, we will be happy to go to conference. Why wouldn't we? We have been trying to do it for 6 months. Hopefully that would lead to a long-term responsible budget agreement with our Republican counterparts. That is what conferences are all about. We have been asking to do that for months and months—but not with the government closed.

Every day that the Speaker refuses to pass the bill they have over there, the resolution they have over there, and reopen the government, the American economy loses billions of dollars—billions of dollars.

The conservative business community has warned of the grave consequence of this shutdown. This shutdown couldn't come at a worse time, just as the economy is beginning to gain steam. The shutdown has furloughed half of the civilian workforce. At Nellis Air Force Base, one of the largest military installations in America, the civilian workforce there is coming to work today to close their offices. There are some exceptions, but certainly three-quarters of them.

The Centers for Disease Control has basically ceased their functions as to what happens if there is a bad flu epidemic someplace or some kind of an outbreak that they control.

Checks will go out for Social Security and our disabled veterans will get their checks. But if you have just come back from Afghanistan or Iraq, sorry, no new applications will be received. No passport applications will be processed. That is pretty important for tourist economies such as Las Vegas. No small business loans will be issued. We talked about the national parks. Millions of Federal workers will be sent home without pay. Thousands and thousands in Nevada are sitting home today, waiting for Congress to act.

As this economic reality kicks in, we need the Republicans also to kick in as to what is reality. I have had a number of Republican Senators come to me and say, You have got to give them something on ObamaCare. What is wrong with this picture? What is wrong with the fixation on a law of this country that has been a law for 4 years? I remind everyone again, the United States Supreme Court said it is constitutional. What is wrong with this picture: We will be happy if you give us something to hurt ObamaCare?

No matter how many times they try to extort the American people and the Democrats here in the Senate, we are not going to relitigate the health care issue. We are not going to do that. If they have problems with that bill, we will be happy to sit down and talk with them about a reasonable approach. But we are not going to do it with a gun to the heads of the American people.

Frankly, it is too late to avert the worst effects of the shutdown, but it is not too late to send the Federal employees back to work. The solution is as clear this morning as it was last

night: Reopen the government. Let all 435 Members of the House of Representatives vote on the legislation they have from us. Then if they want to sit down in a sensible way and talk about PATTY MURRAY's budget, we will do that; if they want to talk about the appropriations bills of Senator MIKULSKI, we will do that—as soon as the House takes a simple, reasonable action; that is, put the American Federal workers back on the job and we can begin the process of negotiating a long-term budget deal. We have been trying to do it for 6 months through the regular order of conference committee and continue to want to do that. But there is no time to waste. Every minute the Federal Government is closed shuts down American families, it costs jobs. Every week the Federal Government is shut down, the economy loses more than \$30 billion. It is time for Republicans to stop obsessing over old battles.

I say to my Republican friends, ObamaCare is over. It has passed. It is the law. And all over America today and for the next 3 months millions of people will sign up. Remember what I said about Nevada: You can buy a policy in Nevada for \$100 a month. In the State of Alaska, I was told there is no premium. It varies State to State. People who have never had health insurance will be able to get it.

I talked here on the floor 1 or 2 days ago. I know what it is like not to have the ability to go to a doctor or hospital. I know that. People have to understand that is not good. It is hard when you or a loved one is hurt or sick and you have nowhere to go. That is what this is all about.

I have respect and admiration for my Republican friends. Every one of them is an accomplished person or they wouldn't be in the Senate. But don't say to me that we are happy to open the government if you give us an arrow we can put in our quiver and say we hurt ObamaCare. It is the law.

I repeat what is a fact: The Republicans hated Social Security and they hated Medicare. How do people feel about Social Security and Medicare today? They feel really good. And that is the same with ObamaCare. People understand how good ObamaCare has been already if you are old and want to get a wellness check or if you have to buy pharmaceuticals. In the sparsely populated State of Nevada they have saved millions of dollars on drugs because of ObamaCare. You can stay on your parents' health insurance until you are 26 years old. That is a pretty good deal. You can finish college, maybe even start your life and not have to worry about that.

People got refunds in Nevada and around the country. Why? Because as part of ObamaCare, AL FRANKEN from Minnesota stuck a provision in the bill—that at least most of us voted for—saying if an insurance company doesn't provide 80 percent of their premium for health care, to having people get better, then they have to refund

that money. This year, all over America hundreds of millions of dollars were refunded to people because insurance companies didn't spend 80 percent toward having people get well. They gave bonuses and all kinds of overhead that weren't fair. ObamaCare is so important.

I say to my friends here in Congress, how many people have come up to them someplace and said, Thank goodness for ObamaCare. My daughter is a diabetic, and now we don't have to worry about her. She is insured.

I have had someone tell me—and this is why I usually include this in my remarks—I have a son who is an epileptic. Has anyone ever seen someone with an epileptic seizure, your little child, and you can't get health care because they have a preexisting disability? That is what ObamaCare is all about. You can't be denied insurance if you have a child who is an epileptic.

We will negotiate, as we have, on going to the budget and talking about a long-term agreement here. We have tried. The President has tried. They are only concerned about ObamaCare—ObamaCare—because they know that everything they do to try to throw monkey wrenches into the wheels of government as far as ObamaCare is good for the people who don't believe in government. They want it to fail. That is why they are doing all this. Each day that goes by—and now it is harder and harder, because on October 1 the exchanges are open. There will be a few glitches and there will be changes. That is the way it was with Social Security. That is the way it was with Medicare. But by the first of the year when millions of people are signed up on health insurance, it is good for everybody and it is good for America. And it is good for America because our country—this great country—will no longer be the only industrialized nation that doesn't have health care for everyone.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from California.

Mrs. BOXER. I won't be long, I say to my colleagues. I wish to thank our Leader REID for bringing back a sense of history, for putting this fight over the new health care law into context.

I did some research on what Republicans said about Social Security when it came up before in the Senate and the House: This is the end of the world. It was socialism. It was going to destroy mankind. I have the quotes. They are in the RECORD.

No, Social Security proved to be the most successful antipoverty program in America. People love it. But they keep trying to take it away.

Under George W. Bush they tried to privatize it and we Democrats stopped it. Then you go look to the 1960s when Lyndon Johnson talked about Medicare and the fact that our grandmas and grandpas at that time were being supported by their children because there was no health insurance available. This was the end of the world. Even Bob

Dole in the 1990s said, I was there fighting against Medicare. Bob Dole, a wonderful man, a Republican: I was fighting against socialism. And now even tea party members put signs up: Don't touch my Medicare.

So now we have the next reform, the Affordable Care Act. Republicans have called it ObamaCare. The President embraces it. In California today people are so excited. Millions of Californians who are uninsured will have the chance to get affordable health care. And, I might say, you go to coveredca.com, and you see the platinum plans that are the more expensive plans, you see the bronze plans, the least expensive, the silver plan. Who is going up there? Not people who already have insurance—it is about 80 percent—but those who don't. And in my State, the working poor will have a chance to get a Medicaid card.

Thank God we have a Governor and a legislature with compassion, unlike other States where the Governors are saying, No, we don't care; we think it is going to cost too much. Well, the fact is we know, and the reason the Affordable Care Act ObamaCare saves a lot of money over time is because people get the health care they need and they get it early.

We have a horrible day here today. I have 169,000 Federal employees, and about 80,000 of them are going to get furloughed. These are hard-working, good people who work for the Border Patrol, who work for the FBI, who work for NASA, who work for the National Park Service, who keep our Federal buildings clean and open, scientists, caseworkers who do important Social Security cases, Medicare cases, food inspectors, small business loan officers so important to the small business community—they are going to pack up and go home. To my Republican friends who brought this Republican shutdown, these are hard-working people.

I don't have one Republican on my bill who would take away our pay in a shutdown. Not one Republican. But they are ready to take away everybody else's pay. As a matter of fact, yesterday—to a person—they voted to take away the employer contribution from their own staff for the health care. I couldn't believe it. By the way, they don't need a law to do it. Senator VITTER's bill: Take away your health care—you don't need to take that employer's share. Give it back to the government. Call in your staff if you think they deserve this treatment and tell them you are going to reduce their salaries, and send the check back to the government. You don't need legislation to do it. That is how mean-spirited it is around here. So we face a nonsensical shutdown.

I want to talk about exactly where we are. The House sent us a 6-week bill that keeps the government going at certain levels of spending. Then the Republicans say, well, the Democrats won't compromise. I have news for the

Republicans. We don't like those numbers in that continuing resolution. We think they are way too low. We think they are hurting the economic recovery. We see the deficit's down by 50 percent. We don't have to bring about this austerity. We think it is hurting jobs and the economy, but that is not enough for them.

They have a victory on the number, but they want to add other things to the budget that have nothing to do with the budget and have everything to do with their obsession with repealing health care reform, just like the Republican Party has had an obsession for years. I forgot to say, remember Newt Gingrich's famous line on Medicare, "It is going to wither on the vine" and PAUL RYAN's budget, which destroyed Medicare as we know it.

It is our main responsibility to keep the government going, to pay our bills. Instead of sending us a clean bill, they send us a bill with lower numbers than we want, we accept the numbers, and then they tack on these mean-spirited amendments to hurt people—with the exception of the repeal of the medical device tax, which would blow a \$30 billion hole in our deficit. They repeal it. They have no way of making up for that money that would be lost to the Treasury.

I could not believe it. Yesterday, their first take was to take away women's health care. Three of us went up to the gallery and we said: You continue your war on women. They actually, in the House, repealed an existing law that gives women cancer screening, gestational diabetes screening, and making sure they have the correct supplies and the counseling to breast-feed their children, and birth control. They actually took that out, repealed it. We went up to the gallery. They left that little thing alone. They gave up on that.

But what are they doing now? Now they are saying their own employees have no right to an employer contribution. This is mean-spirited. This is hurtful. Send us a clean CR for 6 weeks and then vote to go to the budget conference, as Senator MURRAY has asked. But Senator CRUZ keeps appearing on the scene and objecting to appointing conferees to deal with the yearly budget because he says he doesn't want to have them discuss the debt. Who is he to say what you can discuss or not discuss? The last time I checked, there is free speech in this country, including in a conference committee.

That leads me to think they are going to play even worse games with the debt ceiling, about which Ronald Reagan—who asked for it and got, 18 times, an increase in the debt ceiling—said even thinking about defaulting is a horrible and dangerous thing. No President has had this kind of difficulty. They are obsessed with the health care law and they are obsessed with hurting this President.

Let's face facts. I have served with five Presidents; three of them were Re-

publicans. Did I agree with everything Ronald Reagan believed in? The Presiding Officer and I served in those years together. Remember those days of the nuclear weapons proliferation? We had our battles and, yes, we made a symbolic vote once in a while not to raise the debt ceiling. That is fine. But we never purposely brought down the government, ever—ever. The last time Newt Gingrich and the Republicans did it, it was a disaster and they have done it again.

I listened to the majority leader. The majority leader said the Republican leader's tale and his spin is similar to the book "1984." Let me just say, it is "Alice in Wonderland." It is not accurate.

Let's pass the bill we sent over, the clean CR for 6 weeks. Let's go to a budget conference. Let's resolve our problems. This is too great a country to have us suffer like this, a self-inflicted wound that does not have to be done.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Republican whip.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, if we need evidence that there is a parallel universe in America today, on one hand is Washington, DC, and the bubble that seems to occur around this place, and then the rest of America. If we need evidence of that parallel universe, all we need to do is listen to the comments of the majority leader this morning who said, in the presence of these folks in the gallery in the Senate, "The government is shut down. The government is shut down."

That is clearly false. You know what. There are a lot of Americans who think that Washington is a train hurtling down the track, out of control. Who can blame them? When they look at our national debt, \$17 trillion, more than \$50,000 for every man, woman, and child in America; when they see our unsustainable programs such as Medicare and Social Security, which the majority leader and the distinguished Senator from California hold so dear—we do too. Those are important programs. So why would we not want to try to fix them?

The most amazing thing I heard today is the majority leader said that ObamaCare is sacrosanct. It is the law of the land. You cannot touch it. Over the last 3 years the Obama administration has repeatedly and unilaterally issued waivers, granted exemptions, and announced delays relating to this sacrosanct law known as ObamaCare. Since when is it beyond the power of the Congress to change existing law by amending it or repealing it or defunding it? It is absolutely unprecedented to have a majority leader of the Senate, someone who knows this institution as well as anyone, say Congress is powerless to act when our constituents tell us they want us to act because they do not believe ObamaCare will perform as advertised.

The best evidence is the unilateral actions of the President of the United

States, who granted waivers, exemptions, and delays for his preferred constituents. Meanwhile, the rest of America has to live with this monstrosity that will not work as advertised. Again, all we have to do is compare the President's promises to what has actually happened. He said if you like what you have you can keep it. That is not true. Millions of Americans are being dropped from their employer-provided coverage into the exchanges they do not want to be on because they would prefer to have their employer-provided coverage. When the President says the average family will see a reduction in their health care premiums of \$2,500, that is not true because they have actually gone up, on average, \$2,400. For many young people, such as my daughters, they are going to have to pay more so my generation will have to pay less, even though they do not need the government-approved, gold-plated health care plan, nor want it, nor can afford it.

We know that ObamaCare is, in the words of some of the leaders of organized labor, doing permanent damage to full-time work because people are being moved from full-time work to part-time work in order to avoid the employer sanctions, and it is doing damage to our broader economy. All of us have listened to the small business men and women for whom we work, who are our constituents, who say: We cannot afford ObamaCare, so we are not going to hire more people. In fact, we are going to cut back in order to avoid some of the sanctions associated with it or, you know what. At some point I am tired of working for the government instead of working for myself, my family, so I am just going to close business and shut her down.

Despite all that, the majority leader has the temerity to come on the Senate floor and say this is the law of the land; we can't touch it; it is perfect, couldn't be better. That is like whistling past the graveyard. Senate Democrats have refused to make any changes whatsoever, even in those provisions they themselves believe are flawed or defective in ObamaCare. They are refusing to abolish the medical device tax, which is a job killer and kills medical innovation that saves lives, even though 79 Senators, Republicans and Democrats alike, voted against the medical device tax on the budget resolution.

They are refusing to delay the individual mandate, even though the President of the United States has given businesses a 1-year delay in the employer sanction. Yet Democrats voted against delaying the individual mandate for average Americans. How can that be fair?

Most remarkably, when it comes to the ObamaCare exchanges, Senate Democrats have toed the line—you might say walked the plank last night, at the insistence of the majority leader—and they refused to treat Members of Congress the same as all other

Americans. That is what one of the votes we had last night did.

If I were a Democrat running for reelection in red States in 2014, I would be very worried about that. This is a toxic vote for them because Americans, although they may not be able to quote Federalist 57, know what it says in their hearts and spirits because it is fundamental to our democracy; that is, that Members of Congress should be treated no differently, certainly no better, than the rest of America when it comes to the law of the land. Those who cast that vote, who walked that plank last night, will be held accountable in the 2014 election.

You know what. I believe all of this points to the fact that the majority leader and President Obama want a government shutdown because they are reading some of the polls that say they think this will benefit them politically. They are willing to risk a shutdown of the Federal Government in order to gain political advantage. I am not so sure about that. I certainly did not believe that a shutdown—it was not my first choice. I thought surely cooler heads would prevail. When it came to the individual mandate, when it came to the medical device tax, when it came to eliminating the special carve-out for Congress, surely we can find some common ground somewhere. When there is plenty of evidence that the President and his administration have acknowledged the flaws and the defects and the unkept promises of ObamaCare, surely we could find somewhere we could find common ground.

Our colleagues in the House have now passed multiple bills to keep the government open and allow ObamaCare to remain funded, even though clearly our first choice is to repeal and replace this devastating legislation which is killing jobs, running up costs, and falling out of favor with even its most ardent advocates such as organized labor. Unfortunately, the Democratic Party, from the President of the United States to the majority leader of the Senate, to all Democrats in this body, have become the party of no: no compromise, no negotiations, no changes. It is all perfect. We would not change a thing. Life is good.

But the Government shuts down and invariably some people get hurt. The President of the United States was thinking about holding a meeting of congressional leaders at the White House. The report in one of the newspapers in Washington is Senator REID, the majority leader of the Senate, shut it down. The President wanted to demonstrate some leadership. He should demonstrate some leadership. People expect leadership out of the President of the United States, but HARRY REID shut it down. So HARRY REID shut down the Government and got what he wanted.

I think it is about time the President overrule HARRY REID. He was elected by the American people. For many of us he was our second choice, but he is

the President of the United States. He needs to demonstrate some leadership. Instead, the Democrats have doubled down on their strategy, hoping to gain political advantage at the expense of the people hurt. The shutdown was not my first choice, but there are many of my constituents who are calling me, telling me: Look, we are worried. We are scared about our future. We are scared not only about our ability to find jobs, we are scared about our children and their future. My generation was the beneficiary of the sacrifice and hard work of the greatest generation, the World War II generation, people who risked everything so we might have a better life.

I am hearing from a number of my constituents back home, and they are saying, look, we are willing to risk some hardship if that is what it takes to get the American people, the Democratic Party, and the President to wake up and say: We need to work together and fix these problems that we all know exist, the national debt, lower median income, unsustainable Medicare and Social Security, for which the Democrats offer only higher taxes and more regulation. No wonder the economy is growing so slowly. The triple whammy is ObamaCare, which is killing jobs and hurting the economy.

We can do better than that, and we certainly can by working together. Now is the time for the President to call that meeting in the Oval Office.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Missouri.

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. President, I am disappointed that the process has failed us in the last week for my friends in the House and in the Senate who, as I did, when we ran for these jobs, said we would do everything we could possibly do to not go down this path where the government gets between people and their doctor. Those are heartfelt and sincere views. If we were in the majority and had a President on our side, we would have already taken care of this issue.

For those who mistakenly thought if we didn't have any appropriations bill that somehow the President's health care plan wouldn't move forward, we now see today that was a mistaken view of what would happen. Most of the President's health care spending is mandatory. It is something the Congress doesn't even vote on. The way not to move forward is to change the law, but we have not had any opportunity to change this law. We didn't have an opportunity when the Presiding Officer and I served in the House together to change the law. This is a law that never was amendable on the floor of the Senate or the House.

It is hard to imagine that we have decided to restructure 1/16th of the whole economy and everybody's health care relationships without ever having a chance to amend the law. Surely my friends on the other side who have supported this bill, are supportive of this

law, understand the frustration we have when there has never been a possibility to bring an amendment to the law and say: Let's see if we can't make this part of it work better.

What was the amendment yesterday? The amendment yesterday to the law that the House offered the Senate—the principal amendment was: Let's not have the individual penalty for a year. The President, on his own, decided we won't have the corporate penalty for a year, that we wouldn't have the business penalty for a year. This is sort of a strange place for us to wind up. On this side of the Senate we are saying: Don't give job creators—we like to talk about job creators on this side of the Senate aisle—a break and not give people working at those jobs a break.

The President, on his own, can apparently amend the law without us. This is also pretty unusual, that the President, on his own, without us, thinks he can amend the law, but we have no avenue to amend the law. The President, on his own, said: We are going to eliminate the corporate penalty. We are going to say that for this first year, businesses that have more than 50 employees don't have to offer insurance or pay a penalty; that is what the law says was supposed to happen on January 1. But the President said: No, we are not going to do that; that is too hard to do. We are going to take a \$12 billion hit in funding this program because that is what the estimated penalties might have been. Frankly, that might have been low because a lot of businesses that were offering insurance I think will not offer insurance when we get into the requirement to offer insurance.

I think that was probably a low number, but it was a number. It was \$12 billion. Our friends in the House sent something over here that said: If we are going to waive \$12 billion, let's waive \$4 billion. Let's waive the penalty for individuals if they don't have insurance. By the way, many of those individuals were led by this law to believe they were going to get insurance at work. The President said there is no penalty for not offering insurance at work for this first year, but we are still going to penalize individuals who don't have it. If you are an individual and for whatever reason you can't afford or don't have insurance, you will have a \$95 penalty the first year, and it goes up after that. That was a chance to amend the law in the right way. The House would have voted, the Senate would have voted, and the President would have signed a bill. Imagine that. The House votes, the Senate votes, and the President signs a bill. I think that is the way the process is supposed to work. How we could have a \$12 billion waiver for the employer and have a \$4 billion penalty for the employee doesn't make any sense to me.

This law was not amendable, so, sure, would it be better not to amend it on a resolution to support the government? Absolutely that would have been bet-

ter. Would it have been better for the Senate to pass a single appropriations bill of the 12 that were supposed to be passed before the spending year begins? Absolutely. That would have been a lot better. Would it have been better for the Senate to prioritize anything?

Senator MIKULSKI, the chairman of my committee, the Appropriations Committee, as was mentioned earlier, voted out most of the bills. Some of them were voted out on a partisan vote, some of them were voted out on a bipartisan vote, but only one got here, and it was one the leader knew couldn't possibly pass. So we haven't passed one bill. It would have been better to do it that way. We wouldn't be at this moment if in fact we passed the appropriations bills and agreed with the Senate.

Then the majority leader talks about the hardworking chairman of the Budget Committee, and said we can't do our work because we don't have a budget conference. Last year the majority leader said we don't even need a budget. It is too late for the budget. The spending year has begun. That was months ago when that should have happened. Why didn't that happen? Because the House passed a budget that obeyed the law and the law says we can't spend more than \$967 billion. That is the law, like it or not. Just like on my side of this discussion, ObamaCare is the law, like it or not.

Apparently that is a law we have to enforce, but we don't have to enforce the Budget Control Act because the Senate budget was over \$1 trillion—\$1.038 trillion was the Senate budget. Of course we are not going to have an agreement if we are \$70 billion or \$80 billion apart and one side obeys the law and the other doesn't.

Essentially for a week now Republicans in the House have been negotiating with themselves because there is nobody who is willing to negotiate. The President says negotiating on the debt ceiling is blackmail. It has never been blackmail before. In fact, we wouldn't have the Budget Control Act if we hadn't negotiated on the debt ceiling.

So it is blackmail to negotiate? This is a process where the House, the Senate, and the President are supposed to work together to move forward. The debt ceiling has been used over and over to talk about spending. It has been used a number of times to talk about things that weren't spending. Usually Congress is controlled by Democrats with Republican Presidents. And they said, ok, the President doesn't want to talk about this issue without the debt ceiling, so we are going to add it to the debt ceiling discussion. But more often than that, it has been used to talk about spending.

If you go to the banker and say: I have spent all the money you have given me, used up my line of credit, so I would like to extend the line of credit, I guarantee your banker will say either no, you have already exceeded what we told you you could borrow

from us to spend, or if we are going to do that, let's talk about your spending habits. Show me a plan that shows you will spend differently in the future than you spend now. But the President says that is blackmail. More than anybody else in the United States of America, the President of the United States is in a position to figure out what he is for that the Congress would be willing to do. That is not happening, and that has not happened.

There is plenty of blame for the fact that there is no funding today, but there are also plenty of victims. Everybody who depends on the government is a victim. Social Security checks are going to go out, but you can't apply for Social Security if you don't have it. If your check is lost or didn't go out, you can't find out why that happened. People in harm's way: The border control agents, the Immigration and Customs Enforcement people are out there, but their paycheck for their family is not coming.

How could we have solved that yesterday? I am confident that one of the ways we could have solved that is by saying, okay, we won't collect this \$4 billion from individuals just as we are not collecting the \$12 billion from companies.

The reason this health care law continues to be such a problem is it was never amendable, and it was never discussed. Even the President said, as he does some of these unilateral things, if this were a normal circumstance, I would go to Congress and ask them to change the law, but it is not a normal circumstance. I can't find that anywhere in the Constitution where the President gets to decide if the Constitution applies or doesn't apply.

Everybody is to blame here because the Congress is not doing the work Congress is supposed to do and the President is not leading. Americans are going to suffer because the Congress and the President haven't done their job.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, as my colleague from Missouri said, as we are here on the floor today, much of the Federal Government has been shut down. It is shut down because of the Democrats' unwillingness to compromise on keeping the government open and delivering fairness to all Americans.

While employers got a pass from the President on his health care law, the American people still face a mandate that they start signing up for Washington-approved health insurance and the exchange is open today. The House of Representatives took the reasonable and responsible step of keeping the government open while eliminating the health care law's unfairness.

It is unfair that the mandate for health care law will not be delayed for individuals for a year but does delay the mandate for businesses. It is also

unfair to refuse to eliminate special exemptions under the health care law for Members of Congress. That wasn't in the health care law at all. Yet the President has granted special exemptions that I believe show the unfairness of the approach by the Democrats.

President Obama saw that other parts of the health care law won't work and weren't ready. He has currently signed seven different bills which will repeal and defund other parts of his law. In the interest of fairness, he should deal with these parts that are seen all across the country as very unfair.

The President has allowed exemptions and changed the laws for specific groups. He has delayed the employer mandate for a year. The question is: Why does he oppose delaying the individual mandate for a year as well? Why do the bosses get an exemption but not the workers? That is what someone asked me at a health fair in Lovell, WY, over this past weekend.

The American people already know the health care law is unaffordable, unworkable, unpopular, and now families are also saying the health care law is unfair. The House has asked us to treat all Americans fairly, but the President and the majority leader refuse to do that. If you look at their rhetoric over the past week or so, Washington Democrats seemed eager for a government shutdown. Well, they got their wish. Meanwhile, the administration is still promising people great benefits from the new government-run health insurance exchanges. Today hard-working Americans get to see which promises are kept and which have been broken. I think what people are going to learn today can be summed up in two words: Buyer beware.

Here is how the Wall Street Journal put it yesterday. This is their front-page article: "Late Snags on Eve of Health Rollout."

The article says the Obama administration officials are scrambling to get the health law's insurance marketplaces ready to open on Tuesday but keep hitting technical problems, while government-funded field workers across the country say they are not fully prepared to help Americans enroll in the program.

The reports in the news today show a system failure across the country as the exchange goes live. Remember what the President said in his address to the Nation Saturday. He said they are opening on Tuesday no matter what—no matter what, they are opening today.

Well, I think the people across the country are going to have more than just technical problems. First of all, people are going to see significantly higher costs. Last week, the President promised to give Americans, and I quote, "high-quality affordable health care for less than their cell phone bill."

Remember, the average monthly cell phone bill is \$71. In Cheyenne, WY, the least expensive plan a 27-year-old man

can buy will be \$271. The President said less than \$71. Why is it \$271 a month in Cheyenne, WY? And that is for a healthy 27-year-old. So before the health care law, before the exchanges, they could buy a plan such as that for \$82; now, \$271—a lot more than a cell phone bill.

The White House isn't even disputing anymore that prices will be higher for many people. Now the White House is arguing that consumers will spend more, but they will get, as they say, better insurance.

The administration is also saying that prices are going up less than they had previously estimated. They previously estimated they were going to go up a lot. Now they are estimating they are not going to go up quite as much as a lot, but they are still going to go up. A smaller increase isn't what the President promised. He said families could pay \$2,500 less a year. That is what the President promised. It is not what is happening.

Prices in the exchanges are up all across the country. In California, the cheapest plan at the silver level will cost a 40-year-old in Los Angeles \$242 a month. That same person, because of something in the law called community ratings, buying the same plan in Sacramento, CA, would pay \$330 a month. I see the astonishing looks on faces of folks in this Chamber. They can't believe it. They say, How can it be true? Perhaps they should have read the law, read the bill before they voted to pass it. The price is 38 percent more in Sacramento than in L.A. for the same identical policy, for the same 40-year-old person.

In addition to the higher cost of insurance premiums, there are also higher out-of-pocket costs, higher copayments, higher deductibles—all things that are going to make people look at this and say, Cheaper than my cell phone bill? Not a chance. All of that means more money out of the wallets of hard-working Americans and more sticker shock.

The second thing people are learning today as they sign up in the exchanges is that many of them will actually lose their doctor. I practiced medicine for 25 years. I know how important it is for patients to have a long-term relationship with their caregivers. The exchanges—the mandates coming out of this President's health care law—break that bond. That is because insurance companies needed to find ways to keep rates from going even higher. So what they have done is limited the doctors and limited the hospitals that patients can visit.

In New Hampshire, Anthem BlueCross BlueShield is excluding 10 of the 28 hospitals in the State from the exchange. A young mother may not be able to keep seeing the pediatrician whom she knows and trusts with her children's care. That wasn't supposed to happen. The President promised that if you liked your doctor, you could keep your doctor. Today, many

Americans are finding out that is just not the case.

On Sunday, a few days ago, Howard Dean, the former head of the Democratic National Committee, admitted that one of the unintended consequences of the law is that small businesses are going to dump their employees into the exchange. The people who work at those small businesses don't get to keep the insurance they had, and they may not get to keep the doctor they had either.

A third thing people are going to start to see today as the exchanges open for business is that there is a definite risk of fraud and identity theft. How can that be? The administration has hired so-called navigators—people to help enroll consumers in the exchanges. It turns out that these workers aren't well trained or even subject to consistent background checks. Even the Obama administration has been warning that con artists will take advantage of confusion over the law to steal people's identities. As I said earlier, buyer beware. Security may also be inadequate in the giant government "data hub." These are the huge databases of detailed personal information about everyone in the exchanges. The information will be available to people in many different government agencies, in the whole chart of all the different places that this data is going to be sent all throughout government. The administration promises that the data hub will work, but they will not talk about what they have done to ensure that it is secure.

Finally, we know that today there are going to be a lot of customer service system failures. President Obama said that buying insurance through the exchanges would be like shopping at Amazon.com. It is shaping up to be much less consistent than that. Instead of simply clicking a few buttons online, many people are spending hours following up with phone calls, e-mails, and faxes. Faxes?

As recently as two weeks ago, government software couldn't reliably tell people the correct price for their insurance. Late last week, the administration delayed enrollment of some of its small business exchanges. Washington, DC, said last week that parts of its exchanges also weren't ready. In the State of Oregon, State officials say the software problems will force them to delay their Web site. People there will have to find other ways to get help for signing up.

That is not how Amazon.com works. That is not what the President promised.

It didn't have to be this way. The American people knew what they wanted from health care reform. They wanted lower costs and more accessible, quality care. President Obama could have drafted a law that actually addressed Americans' concerns. Instead, he forced through a law making health care more complicated, more uncertain, and more expensive.

Now is the time for the American people to hold the President to his promises. Coverage in the exchanges, as he said, should cost less than your cell phone bill, be as easy and secure as Amazon, and let people keep their doctors. How well those promises hold up will be the real legacy of the Obama health care law.

Thank you, Mr. President. I yield the floor and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SCHATZ). The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. BARRASSO. I ask unanimous consent that the time be equally divided between both parties.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. BARRASSO. Thank you, Mr. President. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. LEE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. LEE. Mr. President, yesterday when the President of the United States addressed the American people, he was very clear about what a shutdown would mean. He said:

Office buildings would close. Paychecks would be delayed. Vital services that seniors and veterans, women and children, businesses and our economy depend on would be hamstrung. Business owners would see delays in raising capital, seeking infrastructure permits or rebuilding after Hurricane Sandy.

Veterans, who have sacrificed for their country, will find their support centers unstaffed. Tourists will find every one of America's national parks and monuments, from Yosemite to the Smithsonian to the Statue of Liberty, immediately closed. And of course, the communities and small businesses that rely on these national treasures for their livelihoods will be out of customers and out of luck.

I share the President's concerns about what will happen to the American people—about “real people,” as one of my colleagues put it yesterday—during and in connection with a government shutdown.

I wish to focus our attention in the coming hours and days on these people. I think it is also important that we continue to focus as well on those who are already hurting—hurting for reasons that don't have to do with the shutdown.

So I would like to turn for a moment to people who are and for a number of months have been already feeling the negative effects of another government policy the President and his allies in Congress staunchly defend.

ObamaCare happens to be the No. 1 job killer in the country. A recent analysis documented hundreds of businesses that are cutting back hours to avoid the crushing cost of ObamaCare's severe mandates. As a result, major unions have said ObamaCare could destroy the 40-hour workweek—the backbone of the American economy. People are losing their health insurance. Just a week ago Friday, 20,000 people—employees of Home Depot—were informed they would be losing their health insurance. UPS is no longer going to provide health insurance for spouses of employees. The grocery store chain Trader Joe's has dropped health care coverage for part-time workers altogether.

For everyone who has been furloughed by the government shutdown, the change hopefully will be temporary—perhaps lasting a few days, maybe even a few hours—if the Democrats decide to negotiate. For everyone who has lost a job, had their hours cut, their wages reduced, or who no longer receives health insurance, the change could well prove to be far more permanent. Do we not have an obligation to do something for those people? I think we do. So let's look for the path forward. Let's return to the President's concern about those who are hurt by a government shutdown.

One positive and encouraging step was taken yesterday in response to action taken by the House of Representatives late Saturday night. Late Saturday night, of course, the House of Representatives passed a bill to ensure that all Active-Duty military personnel—the brave men and women in uniform who serve us bravely—will continue to get paid. Yesterday the Senate took up that measure and passed it unanimously. It did so in a matter of minutes, in a seemingly effortless legislative act.

I think we can do the exact same thing with a number of noncontroversial spending bills that fund aspects of government that Americans overwhelmingly support, that Americans acknowledge we need, and that are completely unrelated to ObamaCare. My plan, in other words, would involve setting up segmented continuing resolutions, appropriations measures that would keep the funding going at current levels to various areas within government, including the Department of Defense, the Department of Homeland Security, military construction, CJS, which includes funding for the Department of Justice, the Federal Court system, the FBI, NASA, the National Weather Service, for example, and also the U.S. Department of the Interior, which includes our national parks.

I mention national parks with special interest because today is the first day of what we hope will be a short, quickly resolved government shutdown. We have at least two Honor Flights coming in from around the country bringing World War II veterans—members of the “greatest generation”—to Wash-

ington, DC, who plan to visit the World War II veterans memorial, a memorial designed specifically for them. When they arrive, if nothing changes between now and then, they will painfully discover what we have learned this morning, which is that those parts of the National Mall have been fenced off and barricaded. They will not be able to get in. They will not even be able to get very close. This is unfortunate and, just as important, it is unnecessary. We can act. We should act. We must act today to resolve this. There is absolutely no reason this noncontroversial aspect of our Federal Government's operations should continue 1 more day or even 1 more hour, for that matter, without being funded.

This is an effort to compromise, an effort that is badly needed, an effort that comes in the wake of other efforts to compromise that have for the most part failed. The House of Representatives has tried now three different times to avoid a shutdown, passing three different measures to make sure our government would continue to be funded. Senator REID and those Members of his conference who support him have rejected all three plans, rejected all three offers to keep the government funded, accusing Republicans of playing games with ObamaCare.

In light of that, let's leave ObamaCare for another day and not hold the vast majority of government functions hostage when the vast majority of government functions do not have anything to do with the implementation and enforcement of ObamaCare. We did it yesterday. We did it. It worked well. It was seamless. It was done with absolute unanimous consent. We did it with respect to Active-Duty military pay yesterday. We can do it for veterans benefits, for border security, for national parks, and for many other government agencies. We can keep government open. We can keep those aspects of our Federal Government funded. We can do so. We should do so. Together, we will do so.

I look forward to having these discussions in the coming hours to make sure we can continue to work together as colleagues. We may not agree on everything, but in those areas where we should agree and where we in reality do agree, let's keep the government funded.

I suggest the absence of a quorum and ask unanimous consent that the time during any quorum call be equally divided between the two parties.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, today is a day of enormous promise and needless tragedy. The promise is the

beginning, another step forward, in America's progress toward providing all America with affordable health care. It is a welcome day because Americans can now enroll in health insurance through the Affordable Care Act. But it is a needlessly tragic day because, in the midst of a tragic economic recovery, millions of Americans are out of work now—an extremist faction having sworn to its followers the Affordable Care Act would never be allowed to stand have now shut down the government because they did not get their way.

I wish to begin by talking directly to the people of Connecticut. Today is an enormously frustrating one for me because in the years and decades of public service I have sought to provide to people in Connecticut, never have I been barred, as we are today, each of us in this Chamber, from serving those needs individually, from phoning them and proactively putting staff on issues that concern them.

Due to the shutdown of the Federal Government, our office operations in both Hartford and Bridgeport are severely reduced, as well as in Washington. If a constituent needs help, if there is an emergency, if there is an issue that is time sensitive, you can reach our office and we will provide help. We will endeavor to meet any issue that concerns the health and safety and lives of the people of Connecticut and in no way is our commitment to you diminished.

I regret that our staff will be handicapped by the legal constraints. Indeed, we are, in many instances, not permitted to work in the ways that we have. But I can assure you we are continuing to serve you.

Today, in Connecticut, enrollment in our health exchanges will ensure access to more affordable quality health care for millions of middle-class families. Access to affordable quality health coverage is a basic right. We cannot deny it and we cannot turn back the clock. We need to work together—Republicans and Democrats—to improve and strengthen it and to bring down the cost of health care. The task ahead is to reform health care delivery to bring down the rising—in fact, the astronomically increasing—cost of health care, and to build on the work that has already begun under the Affordable Care Act and before it.

There is a real difference between an America with affordable health care and one that lacks it. It is an America where being a woman is no longer a preexisting condition, where a family who is responsible and pays for health insurance knows when they arrive at the delivery room they will not be bankrupted by the bill, and where children are not denied care because they happen to get sick.

We are at an impasse in Washington because of a matter of principle. The kind of hostage-taking we see here cannot be allowed to take place. It has no legitimate role in a spending bill. The

bill before us would enable government to continue the people's work, to continue to do business for the American people. That is our job, and the attempt has been to attach to that resolution a completely unrelated demand that the Affordable Care Act be defunded or delayed or destroyed. To tie health care repeal to a funding bill is akin to tying immigration reform to the National Defense Authorization Act. It is a dangerous precedent and it cannot be permitted. If we accept this take-or-leave-it approach that led to this shutdown, we will be forced to govern this way—or fail to govern this way—in the future.

In fact, the resolution before us already involves compromises—less money than is necessary, for example, to rebuild our roads and bridges, to engage in infrastructure, repair and rebuilding. Rather than nation-building abroad, more nation-building here at home has to be done and more investment is required. The compromises in this funding bill have been made in the amounts of money included in it.

The impacts of this shutdown will be felt throughout our economy, in all 50 States, and in thousands of jobs in Connecticut if the shutdown continues for weeks or months. There are millions of families nationally and thousands in Connecticut who will go without paychecks. There are 9,000 Federal employees in Connecticut who will be affected. Their work is important, but the ripple effect is equally important. The losses of income and diminished consumer demand will further inhibit economic growth. Defense contractors will lose their contracts or possibly fail to receive checks when they need them.

A shutdown does nothing to address our need to agree on a responsible budget and replace the slash-and-burn, across-the-board sequestration cuts that are continued in this resolution.

A shutdown undermines one of the key engines of economic growth in this country, research and innovation, such as the research done at the Coast Guard's Research and Development Center in New London, CT. What if the studies in that facility led to better ways to secure our borders, to rescue people lost at sea. Who knows what future innovations will be sacrificed at the National Institutes of Health across the country and in companies around Connecticut.

The lifeblood of our economy—job creation, research and innovation, investment in the future—is undercut and undermined by this shutdown. In fact, even as we go through this process in Washington, the Northeast region is seeking to recover from a shutdown in train service that occurred just days ago. That shutdown has been remedied to some extent—an inadequate degree—so that half or slightly more of the service has been restored. The failures in the feeder cable that led to this shutdown are directly due to a failure of investment in infrastructure, just as the derailment and collision

that was caused months ago reflected a failure to invest in infrastructure. Right before our eyes, as we engage in this kind of conduct in Washington that led to a shutdown, are the consequences of investment failure in our roads and bridges and train system.

With displaced workers struggling to get back into the labor market and businesses in need of specific skills, it is shocking we should cut back first on job training through these unresolved sequester cuts that are projected to force Connecticut's job training services to assist 9,360 fewer job seekers than they otherwise would.

We need to come together now. The message to Speaker BOEHNER has to be: Let the House vote. There are reasonable minds on both sides of the aisle who say let's have a simple, straightforward spending bill without these unrelated demands, without the blackmail and hostage-taking tactics. Let us come together on that kind of simple, straightforward way of continuing the people's business and the government's work for the people.

Many of my colleagues and I listened with great interest to the Senator from Alaska and others on the other side of the aisle saying we should let common sense and compromise prevail and deal with the issues relating to the Affordable Care Act, for immigration, separately and distinctly. They are measures that deserve and need attention, and there are ways to strengthen and improve many of our laws. But let's deal with them on their merits, not as demands or conditions for continuing the people's work by their government.

I truly believe, as we look back on this day, it will be with pride in another step forward for health care reform in this country. A lot of work remains to be done. Bringing down the cost of health care is a task, an unmet challenge that needs to be addressed, as well as other ways to strengthen and improve our health care system and the law itself. Let the House vote on a measure that provides simple, straightforward funding to continue the work of government for its people and allows the economy to continue its recovery and growth, that allows job creators to do their work, and that allows our working families—middle-class families—to have the benefits of education and Social Security and the veterans' benefits they vitally need. These essential functions must continue.

Let the House vote. Let reason prevail, and we can return to the work that government should be doing for its people.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. HEITKAMP). The Senator from South Dakota.

Mr. THUNE. Madam President, I think the American public overwhelmingly opposes ObamaCare. Every survey shows that, and all of us traveling back and forth to our States hear it. But they also support keeping the government open.

We have had an opportunity over the course of the last several days to deal with both of those issues. In fact, in order to avoid a government shutdown, you have to have people who are willing to work together and come to a solution. The House of Representatives has not once, not twice, but three times sent to the Senate proposals that would fund the government and that would make some changes to ObamaCare that would provide the same sort of relief to every American that big businesses have received from the President by virtue of some of his waivers and exemptions. On all three occasions that was turned down—tabled—when it got to the Senate.

So what did the House of Representatives do? Their most recent proposal advanced to the Senate was to allow the House and the Senate to go to conference, to work out the differences. They asked the Senate to appoint conferees to a conference committee, where Senators and House Members might be able to sit down, Democrats and Republicans, and actually hammer out some sort of solution to the challenge we face in front of us. That got tabled this morning. That is the first time I have ever seen that happen in my time in the Congress—and maybe the first time it has ever happened—where one body has asked for a conference and asked for appointing of conferees and it was tabled.

It was not just turned down. We didn't say: No, we are not going to do it now; we will do it another time. But we actually tabled the motion—tabling a motion of the House of Representatives to have a conference on how to work out the situation and in a way that will allow us to keep the government open and hopefully provide middle-class Americans some relief and the economy—the taxpayers and employers across this country—some relief from ObamaCare.

So we are where we are now—with the House of Representatives having suggested to the Senate that we sit down together in a conference committee and work out our differences—and the Senate having rejected that.

We could all argue about how we initially got where we are. I think it all starts when we don't do things the way they are intended to be done around here—in other words, taking the appropriations process and moving those bills forward.

Here in the Senate we had an opportunity, as we do every year, to move the individual appropriations bills. There are 12 separate appropriations bills that historically have been the way in which we have funded the government. This year we didn't move a single appropriations bill through the Senate. The House of Representatives moved four of the bills through the process. They didn't get through all of them, but at least they got some of the appropriations bills completed. But here in the Senate, we didn't do a single appropriations bill.

We all saw this coming. It is not as if there is any secret or surprise. So what happens is there is a calendar, and when those deadlines aren't met, we get up against the end of the fiscal year, the way we are right now, and we have this huge push to try to keep the government from shutting down, and we generally do it in the form of a continuing resolution. But the fact is, if the Senate had done any of its work earlier this year, if we had taken up any of the appropriations bills and passed them, we wouldn't be in this crisis moment we have in front of us now.

Why is it that so many Republicans in both the House and Senate—and, I would daresay, Democrats as well, although they haven't demonstrated it with their votes—are concerned about what is happening with ObamaCare? Obviously, as more information becomes available about ObamaCare, the more concerns, the more frustrations, the more questions the American people have.

I mentioned this previously, but in my State of South Dakota, according to the report put out last week by the Health and Human Services Department, if you compare the premiums that a 30-year-old male and a 30-year-old female would pay in the State of South Dakota for a bronze plan in the exchanges, the increase in premium for people in that age category would be for a man 393 percent and for a woman 223 percent. So for a 30-year-old female in the State of South Dakota, the annual increase in insurance premiums would be \$1,500, and if you are a male in the State of South Dakota, the annual increase would be \$2,000. So there is a real concern about the impact this will have, as these exchanges get up and running, on what people are currently paying for health care coverage.

There is also a lot of evidence and data out there now that suggests it doesn't apply just to a 30-year-old male or female in my State of South Dakota, but it also applies to families. There are many families across this country who are obviously concerned about how this is going to impact the cost of health insurance for them. If we look at what health insurance costs have done for families since the President took office, they have gone up on average about \$3,000. Since ObamaCare passed, those premiums have gone up for families by about \$2,500. So we have seen premiums going up already.

We have a lot of concerns as these exchanges get up and running starting today about what impact they will have on premiums for middle-class Americans. That is why there is a lot of concern and anxiety across the country today with regard to the impacts of ObamaCare.

We also have a lot of concerns about how this will impact jobs and the economy. We have already seen that a majority of the jobs created this year are part-time jobs. There are many reasons for that, but if we talk to employers, one of the things they will point out is

that the requirements in the new health care law are that if they have 50 or more employees, they have to offer government-approved health care or pay a penalty. So a lot of employers are trying to stay under that 50-employee minimum or threshold so they don't have to face that requirement. So what happens? They either don't hire people they were otherwise going to hire or they look at ways to reduce their workforce.

It applies in another way because the definition of "full-time employee" in the law is 30 hours per week. Again, employers will be subject to the same sorts of penalties, so what many are doing is instead of hiring full-time workers, they are hiring part-time workers, 29-hour-a-week workers. Obviously, 29 hours a week doesn't give you the kind of pay that would allow you to meet the needs your family has. So more and more people are working two jobs, and we see the impact and the distortion this new law is creating in the workplace and for a lot of employers.

There was a lot of anxiety and angst about that, which I think was voiced to the President and to his administration. So what does the President do? The President decided to delay the employer mandate in the law for 1 year. I think employers took great comfort at least in knowing it is not going to be there for this year, but they are also still very worried about what will happen when it does kick in in the following year.

But there are all these employers, and people may say: Who are these people? I don't know how one can travel their State or anywhere else outside of their State and not hear from employers who are expressing concerns and asking questions about what this is going to mean for them and expressing grave reservations about the impact it is going to have on their ability to create jobs.

So as we speak with these various employers and get lots of anecdotal evidence—last week there was an interview done with employers in my State of South Dakota. A person was asked about how this would impact them, and he said: I guess we are probably not going to hire as many people as we otherwise would have hired. He said: I think that is going to be happening with businesses all over the country.

That is one example from my State of South Dakota, but if we look at sort of the aggregate, according to Investor's Business Daily there are some 300 businesses that have said they are going to reduce the size of their workforce or not hire people they otherwise might hire as a result of the impact of ObamaCare. So we see more and more of the experience, the evidence that we get day to day speaking with employers in our individual States, but we also start seeing this cumulative effect and more and more businesses expressing those concerns.

When we look at the economy today and where we are, we find out very

quickly that the unemployment rate, which has been at north of 7 percent, 7.5 percent for a long time now—when we add back into that equation the number of people who have either stopped looking for work or who are working part time when they would rather be working full time, the actual number is much higher. We have about 22 million Americans, and the unemployment rate climbs quickly into the double-digit territory when we add those people back. The labor participation rate—which is the number of people in the workforce relative to the number of people who could be—is at the lowest level literally in 35 years.

So we have a historically low labor participation rate, fewer people actually looking for work, some just flat having given up on it. We have a very soft economy. I don't think anybody would describe the economy today as being robust. We have a chronically high unemployment rate, jobs that are being created being part-time jobs, and so we have the overall average household income in this country actually going down. In fact, if we look at the statistics since the President took office, the average household income has gone down by about \$3,700 per family—\$3,700 less income for the average household—\$3,000 higher in health care costs, and we can see how middle-class families are getting increasingly squeezed by what is happening as a result of ObamaCare.

One of the more recent suggestions that came over from the House of Representatives last evening came back with a funding resolution to fund the government and there were a couple of provisions that dealt with some of these more onerous provisions in the ObamaCare law. One had to do with the individual mandate.

The whole theory behind giving people relief from that is to give them the same treatment, to be fair, that employers get. If the President has chosen to waive the employer mandate for big businesses—which he has for 1 year—why then require individuals to have insurance?

There is going to be a significant cost associated when everybody has to buy insurance. It is about a \$12 billion cost to people across this country. The question then is, If you are going to give the temporary relief to the business community, why would you not in a fair way at least make sure individuals are treated the same way?

That seemed to be a pretty compelling argument. If you are going to do something that actually does impact in a favorable way people across this country who are going to be suffering even more from the harmful effects of ObamaCare, it would strike us as at least reasonable to suggest giving a 1-year delay to people under the individual mandate—the same delay the President has given big businesses under the employer mandate.

The other provision attached to the continuing resolution proposal ad-

vanced by the House last night had to do with treating Members of Congress, their staff, and people here in Washington, DC, the same as everybody else. It strikes me again, at least, that if we are going to have these policies, everybody ought to be treated the same way.

Frankly, my hope would be that we could relieve everybody. I would love to see us permanently delay this so that no American would be subject to the harmful impacts and effects of ObamaCare. But for sure, for certain, people here in Washington, DC, should not be exempt. There should not be a separate carve-out or separate treatment for people here in Washington, DC, compared to other people around the country.

So the legislation that came over from the House last night included a 1-year delay in the individual mandate—trying to treat individuals and people across the country the same way as businesses are being treated in terms of the way the law is being applied—and secondly, make sure people here in Washington, DC, Members of Congress and their staff and others, are treated the same way as everybody else around the country. In other words, there is no exemption, there is no carve-out, there is no preferential treatment for people here in Washington, DC. Those were the two things that were attached to the funding resolution last night. That got tabled here in the Senate.

So having sent now three different proposals over, I think the House of Representatives has decided, OK, clearly the Senate doesn't like any of our ideas. Let's get together and have a conference committee.

So that was proposed, and—again, something I have never seen done before—there was a motion to table a request to go to conference. We get a lot of requests to go to conference. Sometimes those are not adhered to, and you have a debate about various conference meetings on various pieces of legislation that we deal with here in Congress. But I have never seen a tabling motion on a request to go to conference. It is a pretty clear indication that the Senate has no interest in resolving this matter; otherwise, they would at least sit down with our counterparts in the House of Representatives and say: What can we do to find that middle ground? What can we do to find that consensus? How can we resolve the differences we have here in a way that will keep the government up and functioning and hopefully provide some relief for people who are struggling under the impacts of ObamaCare?

So that is where we are today. What is interesting about it is our colleagues on the other side, the Democrats—not all of them because they weren't all here at the time, but those who were all voted in favor of ObamaCare. There isn't a single Republican who was here at that time who did, nor are there any here today who would. In fact, every time we have had an opportunity to vote to repeal all or parts of it, every-

body on this side of the aisle has voted for that.

Now, our colleagues on the other side continually hold out this argument that, after all, this is the law of the land. Frankly, they are right. It is the law of the land. But it is pretty obvious that at least in the President's view there are parts of the law that don't need to be applied right away; otherwise, he wouldn't have extended a 1-year delay or a 1-year waiver under the employer mandate.

So it is pretty clear that the President has a different view than perhaps his allies here in the Senate with regard to what that law actually means. He has been perfectly willing on not just that occasion but on other occasions to take portions of a law and not apply them, to waive them and provide exemptions for particular groups of people—namely, those here on Capitol Hill and also big businesses around the country. So there is a very discriminate way in which the President is approaching this law. It seems to me, at least, that in fairness he would give the same favorable treatment to individuals that he has given to big businesses.

The other thing that is really interesting about the folks on the other side of the aisle saying this is the law of the land is that there are many things that are the law of the land. The Budget Act is the law of the land. The Budget Act, which was passed back in the 1970s—1973 or 1974—is the budget law that Congress has been under now for the past almost 40 years. Yet for 3 consecutive years in a row the Democratic majority didn't even pass a budget, didn't move it through the committee, didn't bring it to the floor, just said: We don't need to do it. We will just ignore the law. That happened for 3 years in a row.

So I would suggest that our colleagues on the other side who are quick to say that ObamaCare is the law of the land are very willing, when it serves their purposes or they find it convenient, to completely ignore other laws that have been on the books for a much longer period of time. So that argument really misses the point.

I guess what I would say is that I hope this can be resolved. It needs to be resolved. I think we need to provide some relief for the American people from the impacts of ObamaCare. Clearly, our economy needs a break. The American workers and middle-class families need a break. Employers have already been given a break—big businesses, by the President, have been given a 1-year delay under the law.

Why not apply that to others who are going to be hurt in an equal fashion.

Just to put a fine point on why it is important, we think, to have some delays—today is the day they roll out the exchanges. But if you look at what the reports are about, whether or not those things are ready, up and ready to go, it is pretty clear they are not ready for prime time. We hear about glitches,

which is the President's word—I think that is a kind word—malfunctions, inaccuracies, bumps in the road. We have heard them described all those different ways. But the clear reality is that this thing is not ready for prime time. Why would we not delay it?

There was a story yesterday in the Wall Street Journal and the headline was "Late Snags on Eve of Health Roll-out."

Nonprofit groups and brokers that will help enroll consumers in the marketplaces, known as exchanges, say they haven't yet had a chance to preview the systems. Technical problems have limited certification for some nonprofit workers involved. And some of these groups say they haven't fully staffed up for the influx.

The exchange software that determines whether people get . . . subsidies was returning accurate determinations about two-thirds of the time late Friday, up from less than 50 percent earlier in the week.

At least they are trending in the right direction.

Additionally, one Web broker agreement with CMS to sell Federal exchange health plans, announced that it will not be able to offer those plans on October 1, blaming CMS delays.

The point is this is clearly not ready for prime time. Last week the District of Columbia said they are experiencing a very high error rate. Error rates, malfunctions, inaccuracies, bumps, glitches—these all seem to me to suggest that this is something that needs to be delayed. I think that would make the most sense, given the President has already acknowledged that for big businesses, for employers. It ought to be delayed for a year.

I think there is bipartisan support for giving individuals and families relief just like businesses have been granted. We have a Democratic Senator, a colleague from West Virginia, who said last week a delay for individuals would be very reasonable and sensible. But this week Senate Democrats voted in lockstep with the President and refused to give low-income and middle-class families that same relief that has been provided to big businesses and to some of the President's allies.

We are now in a holding pattern. It seems to me at least that the ball is in the Senate majority leader's court. The House of Representatives has asked for a conference, which has been rejected. The response was we are not going to sit down, we are not going to negotiate this. The President has said we are not going to negotiate. We are not going to sit down. We do not believe there is any room here for negotiation.

I think the American people are going to perceive that to be an unreasonable position because I think most people understand when we come here we have differences of opinion. But the way you resolve those is you sit down and work out those differences. You try to come to some resolution that would allow everybody to move forward.

What we have seen here is that time after time, the House of Representa-

tives has sent to the Senate proposals. Those have been tabled here, and the House has sent back another one. I said three times now that has happened. Finally, the House of Representatives said: OK, we get it. You do not like what we are sending you. Let's sit down and see if we can work this out. Let's have a conference and see if we can work out our differences. That was tabled by the majority leader earlier today.

What is coming out of the White House, what is coming out of the Democrat majority is: Sorry, we don't negotiate. We are not going to sit down. We are not going to try to find common ground. We are not going to try to find a bipartisan solution to this. We are going to have it our way, and you can take it or leave it.

I don't think that is what the American people sent us here to do. I think they sent us here to do the people's business. I said before, when I started my remarks, I believe the American people overwhelmingly dislike ObamaCare and the effect it is having. I think they overwhelmingly believe the government should stay open. I think we can accomplish both of those objectives, hopefully sooner rather than later, if both sides will sit down in good faith and actually try to work out a solution.

That is certainly not going to happen as long as the President continues to stay dug in. It appears he has drawn a line in the sand. That seems to be the tactic and the approach that is being taken by the Senate majority, by the Democratic leader. That is not going to get us to an answer. That is not going to get us to a solution. All that is going to do is to provide even more frustration, even greater disdain and cynicism from the American people when they see the in-fighting that is going on here and a lack of a willingness on the part of the Democratic majority to sit down with House Republicans and figure out what is in the best interests of the American people as we move forward.

I hope we can do better. The American people deserve better. Future generations deserve better from us.

I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Tennessee.

Mr. ALEXANDER. I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. ALEXANDER. Madam President, this government shutdown is disappointing to me. It's disappointing to those who are affected by it, and I'm sure it's disappointing to the American people. Because they're seeing their government not function in such a visible way.

What is especially disappointing to me is the unwillingness of the President and Senate Democrats to make a reasonable effort to resolve the real differences of opinion that exist here.

It's not unusual, Madam President, that we have differences of opinion in Washington, DC. In fact, the Founders created a government here with the expectation that it would kick up to the Nation's Capitol the disputes we couldn't resolve in our own families, disputes we couldn't resolve in our city councils, in county commissions, and our State legislatures and State government. And the Founders intended that those disputes, which are in this body, not be resolved easily by creating a system of checks and balances: A Supreme Court, a Presidency, and a Congress.

And by creating, in this body, the rules that make it very difficult to come to a result.

The idea was that we didn't want a king.

A king is efficient. Tyranny is efficient.

Our Founders didn't want that.

They didn't want a despot. They wanted a way to get, eventually, to a result. They sought to avoid the tyranny of the majority by creating these checks and balances and these rules in the Senate. They sought to create a situation where the majority couldn't ride roughshod over the minority.

But I do not think the Founders envisioned a system of checks and balances that produced a permanent stalemate on issues that are important to the American people. Even in the most contentious of issues—and there have been many issues in our history much more contentious than anything we are dealing with today.

They didn't envision that the government would simply shut down or stop operating or stop trying to come to a result. That is why I find the attitude of the President and the Senate Democrats so disappointing.

By any fair measure, the proposals by the Republican House of Representatives to bring this to a solution are reasonable proposals. Let's look at what they've proposed.

They proposed that we continue funding the government. Every single proposal the House has made to this body is that we continue funding the government. And they've proposed that we also, at the same time, No. 1, be fair to the middle class by delaying the individual mandate in the new health care law for a year.

Now, the President has already himself delayed seven major provisions in the new health care law that is supposed to take effect today. These include the employer mandate, which is \$12 billion over 10 years for corporations. Yet the President and Senate Democrats are saying we can give the employers a \$12 billion break by a 1-year delay, but we're going to stick it to the middle class of America by fining them \$95 if they do not buy health care and sending the IRS out to collect it next year if they fail to do it.

What we suggested was, since the President himself has already delayed seven major provisions, since the regulations aren't written, let's also delay

the individual mandate for a year. That would be fair to the middle class.

No. 2, the House has suggested that we can continue funding the government and be fair to those who are ill by repealing the medical device tax. Seventy-nine senators have voted for the medical device tax repeal, including a large number of Democratic senators.

No. 3, the House Republicans have said, let's continue to fund the government and be fair to the American people when it comes to health care. Treat the American people the same way Congress is treated.

And finally, most recently, the House Republicans have said, let's continue to fund the government and can we not just sit down and talk about it? Have a conference?

Which is the way, under our rules established by the Constitution, we're always supposed to resolve disputes. And the answer has been no from the Senate Democrats.

No, to giving the same consideration to the middle class, the people who are required to buy health insurance; no, to giving fairness to those who are ill by repealing the medical device tax; no, to giving fairness to the American people by treating them the same way Congress is treated; and no, to giving fairness to the system in saying can we not just sit down and talk in a conference, which is our way of resolving disputes.

And the answer by the President and the Senate Democrats is no, no, no.

The President's role is to bring us together. He said that during his campaigns. He has a great capacity for persuading the American people that he is right. He seems to be able to talk with the Iranian rulers, but not to the congressional leaders.

Our goal is fairness for the middle class, fairness for the taxpayer.

Our latest offer from the House of Representatives was, let's keep the government running and let's sit down according to our rules and have a conference and talk about it.

This stubbornness in the face of reasonableness will not be good for our country, will not be good for either political party, it will not help us to achieve the kind of result on this and other issues that the Founders intended by creating a system of checks and balances in our democratic form of government.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

Mr. CARDIN. I ask unanimous consent to be able to speak as in morning business for up to 10 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. CARDIN. I yield first to the majority leader.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

Mr. REID. Madam President, the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives holds the key to reopen the Federal Government. It is an

easy key to use. In fact, it is very simple. The key is to allow 435 Members of the House of Representatives to vote to reopen the Government, and do it now. It is not too late to avert the worst economic problems that this shutdown relates to. But you see, I am not the only one calling for the Speaker to open the government. I am not the only one calling on him to do the right thing.

This is what Republican Congressman SCOTT RIGELL, from Virginia said. He said it this morning. It is a direct quote:

We fought the good fight. It is time for a clean CR.

That is a Republican Congressman. If the House votes to reopen the government, Democrats will gladly go to conference. Unfortunately, I read that Speaker BOEHNER and House Republicans are engaging in silly political stunts instead. What he is going to do is have some Republicans, Members of the Congress, sit down for a photo op across from empty chairs. That is really unique. Has that ever been done before? Maybe only five or six thousand times since I have been in Washington. What they are really sitting down to instead of empty chairs is an empty stunt. I say to the House Republicans, it is time for the photo ops and those silly stunts to end. Shutting down the government is not kid stuff. That is kid stuff. Shutting down the government is deadly serious.

The business community has warned of the economic consequences of the shutdown. It is now being proven. For every day the Speaker refuses to use the key to reopen government, it costs the American economy billions of dollars—every day. The solution is as clear this morning as it was last night: Reopen the government. He holds the key to putting millions of public servants back to work. Once that happens we are happy to go to conference. But only if the government is reopened.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that following the remarks of Senator CARDIN, the Senate recess as provided under the previous order.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from Maryland.

CONTINUING APPROPRIATIONS

Mr. CARDIN. Madam President, I see my colleague from Tennessee just left the floor, and I was listening to his comments. I know he is having a hard time—as many of our Senate colleagues are—understanding or justifying the actions of the Republicans in the House.

Make no mistake about it, this is a House Republican shutdown of the government. The majority leader was talking about the consequences. The House Republicans have tried to hold all of us hostage, but it is not going to work.

When they talk about negotiating, the majority leader is absolutely right: We have tried on numerous occasions to get to a conference on the budget only to find objections from the Republicans to sit around the table to talk about the budget of the country. We are not going to yield to extreme measures. We should have the government open, and then we should be negotiating the issues that are important.

I take this time to talk about our Federal workforce and to talk about the impact this shutdown will have on Federal workers and the people of Maryland and the people of our Nation. I am proud to represent Maryland in the Senate.

Once again Federal workers are going to be asked to make sacrifices on behalf of their country, but this time they don't understand it. This shutdown will have a negative impact on them and on our country. For 3 years Federal workers have been working without a pay increase or an adjustment of salary. I had my staff check some of the statistics on the number of Federal workers we have today compared to the historic numbers. We actually have fewer workers per capita today than we did in the 1950s. We are asking our Federal workforce to do more with less, and we are asking them to continue to work under sequestration when many have been furloughed.

Now our Federal workforce has been furloughed in great numbers and are uncertain as to whether they will receive a paycheck. There are Federal workers who are working today and they don't know when they are going to get their paychecks. It is wrong, and it is going to hurt families. They are going to have to try to figure out how to pay their bills without getting a paycheck.

This goes well beyond the Federal workers themselves. Look at the reductions we see in the Federal workforce here in the Washington area. What do you think is happening to the retail establishments, the small businesses, and our economy? We estimated in Maryland that we would lose \$15 million a day for every day the Federal Government is closed.

Mark Zandi said the impact of a Federal shutdown will increase unemployment by half a percent. In 1995 to 1996, the last time we had a shutdown, OMB estimated it cost the taxpayers \$1.4 billion. This is wasting taxpayers' money, and it is putting people under incredible stress as to how they are going to pay their bills. For what? To move an extreme agenda, to try to see if hostage-taking works in the Congress? This will have a major negative impact on our economy.

The private sector has recently created 7.5 million jobs over the last 42 months. There are more people on private nonfarm payrolls than at any time since September 2008. Jobless claims are close to a 5-year low. The second quarter of 2013 marked nine consecutive quarters of economic

growth, the longest stretch since before 2008. And now because of the House Republican shutdown, we want to reverse that? Do we want to go back to a failing economy? That is what is at stake here. Do we want to cost our taxpayers money with the inconvenience we are causing the people of this country by a government shutdown? Talk about life-threatening delays. The researchers at NIH are being compromised. The inability of NIH to take on new patients as a result of a shutdown absolutely affects the welfare of the people of our country. Small businesses are unable to get SBA loans. How do they run their businesses during this shutdown?

In my State of Maryland—and I know this is true around the country—the backlog on veterans getting their disability claims heard is tremendous. That will now grow as a result of this government shutdown.

The FDA is responsible for food safety. I could talk about a lot of different agencies. Forty-five percent of the FDA's workforce, or 6,620 employees, will be furloughed. The FDA will be unable to support the majority of its food safety nutrition and cosmetic activities. The FDA will also have to cease safety activities such as routine establishment inspections, some compliance and enforcement activities, monitoring imports, notification programs, et cetera. That is what this shutdown will cause. Do we want to make sure we have a safe food supply? Well, today it is not quite as clear as it was yesterday.

We know about the national parks and the zoo being closed. That makes no sense at all. People will be inconvenienced, but people's health will be put in jeopardy because of this House Republican shutdown. It is totally illogical.

We have tried to go to conference on the budget. There are three problems we have before we get a workable budget for this fiscal year. First, we have to keep government open; second, we have to make sure we pay our bills; and third, we have to get rid of sequestration. That is what we have to get done. And, yes, we have to sit down, Democrats and Republicans, to work out a budget for this fiscal year, but we can't do it while the government is closed.

When we fail to pass a budget—and quite frankly, it is the Republicans who have been unwilling to sit at a table to come up with a budget. The regular order is to pass a continuing resolution that continues the budget so the government can operate until we have a budget. We have always done that at the current level.

Well, the Democrats are willing to go even further. We are willing to take the Republicans' reduced budget number because of sequestration, and they can't even accept that because, quite frankly, there are too many on the other side of the aisle in the House who want a government shutdown. That is not the way we should be operating.

I am proud to represent so many Federal workers. I am proud to represent the people of Maryland, and we are going to continue to fight on behalf of the right policies. We are going to fight to make sure Federal workers are made whole when this is over, and that they are able to get their paychecks with full pay. It is going to be a struggle because of the attitude—particularly from the Republicans—in the House, but we are going to continue to fight for what is right for our Federal workforce and for the American people.

Let us pass a resolution to keep government open. Let us sit down and work out a budget for this coming year. Let's do what is right for the American people.

With that, I yield the floor.

RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands in recess until 2:15 p.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 12:39 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Ms. BALDWIN).

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate will come to order.

The Senator from Illinois.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that there be a period of morning business for debate only until 5 p.m., with the time equally divided and controlled between the two leaders or their designees and with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each, and that the majority leader be recognized at 5 p.m.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, I suggest the absence of a quorum and ask that the time that is consumed under the quorum call be equally divided between the Democrats and Republicans, and all subsequent quorum calls be equally divided between the two parties.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

CONTINUING APPROPRIATIONS

Ms. MIKULSKI. Madam President, I rise to continue the discussion on the situation in which we find ourselves, which is that the entire Government of the United States of America has been shut down, and those Federal employees who are working are working without pay.

This is a terrible situation. I implore the House to pass a clean short-term continuing funding resolution that the Senate sent over to them 4 days ago so we can reopen the government. Let's reopen the government. Let's reopen the Government of the United States of America. The way we reopen the government is to pass the Senate continuing funding resolution.

What would it do? It would fund the government at fiscal 2013 levels. That doesn't mean it adds new money; so there is no new money. It is keeping us at current spending levels. We would have a short-term continuing resolution until November 15 while we work out other issues, and then we can get over the speed bump of raising the debt ceiling. I believe that is the path forward.

Where we are now has terrible consequences. It has terrible consequences for our economy. It has terrible consequences for our standing in the world. It has terrible consequences for the functioning of our government.

We are speaking now about a shutdown of the government. Right now, there are hundreds of thousands of men and women who work for the Federal Government who signed up to do a job in the service of their Nation. They have literally, with the passing hours, had to either take a furlough—and a furlough means we have essentially laid them off; we have laid them off—or they are working because their work is essential, such as an FBI agent, but they are not getting paid. We are paying them with IOUs. This is not the United States of America.

I am thinking about those people who are working every single day. Let me paint a picture for my colleagues. In my own State, we are the headquarters to the National Weather Agency. People who watch TV think they get their weather news from either the Weather Channel or they get it from their local TV or radio station through doppler radar. It is terrific. But guess where they get their information. They get it from their Federal Government. They get it from the weather forecasters at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration who work hard every day predicting the weather and getting out the information that news people can use in their own community. So if a person is a farmer, he is getting that information. If a person is a waterman who works on the Chesapeake Bay and he has to make sure the storm is not coming while he is out there crabbing or oystering to keep his business going, he needs to know the weather. Whether a person is a county executive or a mayor, people need to know what their weather is going to be. So they have been on the job, whether they have been predicting hurricanes or tornadoes or giving us the basic day-to-day information. The weather forecasters are at their duty station, but what are we saying to them now? Guess what. Be there, but we are not going to pay you except through IOUs.

Yesterday I spoke about the National Institutes of Health and the Food and Drug Administration in my State. There is another major agency which is not in my State but very important to the functioning of our country: the Centers for Disease Control. Right now, they are working down there in Georgia. What is the Centers for Disease Control? What is their job? Their job is exactly that: disease control. When veterans and other people were ill and getting sick in a hospital in Philadelphia, they were called in because they are our top biosleuths in America. They are our own bioforensic scientists, our own bio-CSI team. They were the ones who found out about something called Legionnaires' Disease, and they helped those people who got sick in that hotel, and were able to put out that information. They are the ones who are standing sentry to make sure there is no emerging surprise or pandemic in the world. They are the ones who are gathering information now to know the latest threats to the health and safety of the United States of America.

What is it they are doing? If a person is a pediatrician, they are watching the CDC to see what are the latest causes of ear infections that could be infecting children and the right treatment to help them, the right treatment for their doctors to be able to know. That is what they do. When their labs are being closed, it leaves States on their own—State health departments—to be able to look out for antibiotic-resistant viruses and other infectious diseases, and a variety of other kinds of things. We need the Centers for Disease Control. They employ thousands of people in Atlanta, GA. Yet we are telling them: Well, maybe not the way we need you.

Yesterday, the President passed a bill to guarantee military personnel be paid on time. We support that. But what is missing from the bill is important. The intelligence community, made up mostly of civilians, will not be covered. It means that over 72 percent who work in our intelligence agencies will either face furloughs or will be working with IOUs.

Who else involved in our national security is not covered? We didn't cover border security. We didn't cover FBI. We didn't cover DEA. We didn't cover the U.S. Marshals. What are the marshals doing? It is not like Wyatt Earp. Marshals aren't just out there like cowboys in a Wild West movie when we watch a miniseries. The Marshals Service is very important. Do my colleagues know what they are doing in Maryland right now? First of all, they provide security in the courthouse. They do the security to protect the judges. We have some of the most violent gangs and criminals coming in and the marshals need to protect those who are enforcing the law through the judicial system.

They are also going after the sexual predators. They are the ones who track

all of the evidence and go after sexual predators to make sure they are not loose in the neighborhoods, and they are working with local law enforcement.

They also go after missing fugitives. We know about the big signs that say "Ten Most Wanted." Well, guess who goes after them. The Marshals Service. That is one of their primary responsibilities. That is what Federal law enforcement is. These employees are also critical to national security.

Trying to do this piecemeal—oh, we have looked out for our troops. We should look out for our troops. But while we look out for our troops, we should look out for those who come back home.

I know the Presiding Officer and others have been strong supporters of our veterans. I am a strong supporter of our veterans. Many of the services being performed by the VA are open, such as VA health care, but there are other services where we have to delay the backlog on veterans' cases, veterans' disability benefits. Through appropriations, we have actually put money in the Federal checkbook to deal with more training, more overtime to reduce this backlog.

When we speak about shutdowns, I want to take a moment to talk about my own office in relationship to veterans. I am the longest serving woman in Senate history. It is a great honor. In my 25 years as a Senator and after 25 years as the senior woman here, I have only closed down my office twice: once in 1995 and this morning. I cannot express to my colleagues the heavy heart I had when I talked to my staff. My staff is a great staff. Whether they are working in Maryland or whether they are working here in Washington, we are a local phone call away to 6 million Marylanders. Of those people who work for me, one is a young lady. I hope I don't embarrass her if she is watching TV. Her name is Denise. Denise has worked for me for 30 years, back when I was in the House of Representatives and now as a Senator. She is a case-worker, a constituent service worker. For 30 years she has specialized in helping me respond to the needs of veterans. Veterans all over Maryland love her. They depend on her, and I depend on her so that I can help those veterans.

I know my time has expired, but Denise's time on the job shouldn't expire. I want to make sure Denise is on her job. I want to reopen my office. I want to make sure we reopen government. We can do that if we pass the Senate continuing resolution.

Hello to the House. Don't send us piecemeal. Let the House vote on the Senate bill. No gag rule in the House. Free the House, open the House, open government, and let's get the job done.

I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Utah.

Mr. HATCH. Madam President, I would like to quickly begin by saying

that last night at the stroke of midnight the government faced its first partial shutdown since 1996. There has been a lot of partisan talk back and forth about who is to blame, but our constituents are demanding action and rightfully expect us to resolve this situation. We need to act swiftly to get the government up and running again.

Let me turn to another matter. Today's date is October 1, 2013. Since the passage of the so-called Affordable Care Act in 2009, millions of people have looked forward to this day, probably with more dread than anticipation. That is because today is the day the ObamaCare health insurance exchanges—where millions of Americans will be required by law to purchase health insurance—are open for business.

Perhaps I should say they are supposed to be open for business. President Obama, in his futile effort to sell his health care law to the American people, has been trying to paint a rosy picture about what will happen starting today. He has claimed that today will mark the first step in a process that will provide health coverage for millions of Americans. Sadly, now that we are here, the picture is much cloudier than the President would like to admit. Indeed, as the exchanges begin to go live, we have more questions than available answers. We know the exchanges have been met with significant delays—delays for large businesses, delays for small businesses, and even some delays for some of the State exchanges themselves. We know about other technical and logistical problems facing the exchanges. I will talk more about those in a few minutes.

What we don't know is what will happen to the average American trying to sign up and navigate his or her way through the ObamaCare exchanges. I wish to take a few minutes to talk about that today and, in doing so, I wish to talk about someone we met during the 2012 election campaign. Her name is Julia. We all remember Julia. She was the faceless character created by the Obama campaign to symbolize the cradle-to-the-grave support women would receive under President Obama's administration, including under ObamaCare. She was supposed to be the embodiment of President Obama's compassion for women and his opponent's lack thereof.

Unfortunately, President Obama's "Life of Julia" outline was short on some details, particularly when it came to Julia's efforts to obtain and keep health insurance through the ObamaCare exchanges. Today I will try to fill in some of those details. However, it will be difficult because, as I said, there is still much we don't know about how the exchanges are going to work.

As we follow Julia into the exchanges, the first question that comes to mind is: What brought Julia to the exchange in the first place? Is she one of the millions of Americans who will

end up losing employer-provided health insurance as a result of ObamaCare? Is she now a part-time worker after her employer had cut her hours to avoid the employer mandate? Perhaps she was laid off so her employer could keep their number of employees below the threshold required to be considered small business under the law.

In any event, Julia has come to the exchange looking for health insurance because that is what the law requires her to do. The next question is, Who will explain to Julia how she is to sign up for insurance under the exchange? What we know is that she will be assigned to a navigator, a person employed by a private organization tasked with assisting the uninsured in determining what type of coverage they qualify for. This person, who is not a government employee, will have access to her personal information, including her Social Security number and household income data.

Sadly, there is no telling whether this person will steal that information and use it for nefarious purposes. That is because the administration, in the drafting of the rules for the certification of navigators, cut corners on things such as training and background checks, putting consumers and patients at increased risk for fraud and identity theft.

I came to the floor to discuss this a couple of weeks ago. This was something that Members of Congress warned the administration about months ago. Sadly, our warnings have been ignored. So the bottom line for Julia is that before she even enters the exchange, an unqualified navigator or perhaps an imposter posing as a government counselor may have easy access to her private personal information, allowing them to steal her identity and create a nightmare for Julia to fix. Somehow, I do not think the authors of ObamaCare had this in mind when they created the navigator program.

The next question Julia will face is whether the exchange in her State will be ready. This, of course, will depend on where Julia lives. Not all of the State exchanges will be ready to launch today. Idaho, Minnesota, Oregon, Colorado, and the District of Columbia have already announced they will be delaying the launch of their exchanges.

The New York Times ran an article about the delays and glitches facing the exchanges this past weekend. According to the article, "Many of the 16 directors of State-run exchanges are describing October as a soft launch period when Americans can start exploring their coverage options—but on Web sites that may be incomplete, vulnerable to glitches, and perhaps not ready for an onslaught of customers."

In other words, Julia, depending on where she lives, may not even be able to sign up for insurance today because of the problems and delays—problems and delays many of the exchanges are

now facing. But for the sake of discussion, let's assume Julia is able to sign on to the exchange and select a health insurance plan. Now that she has picked a plan, the question is, Will her personal information be secure?

In order to sign up and purchase an insurance plan, Julia will have to hand over a virtual mountain of personal information, including her Social Security number, her tax return, and the like. All of this data will be entered into the Federal services data hub, a new information-sharing network that allows State and Federal agencies to verify her information.

The problem with the data hub is that it has not gone under any independent review to determine if the data that is entered is secure. The administration announced that the data hub had passed internal testing on September 10, a mere 3 weeks before it was set to go live. Sure, they may claim the data hub is operational and ready to go, but no independent watchdog such as the Government Accountability Office, for example, has had a chance to verify the security operations or make recommendations to better safeguard the privacy of consumers.

Absent an independent review, there is simply no way of knowing whether the exchanges have adequate safeguards in place to protect enrollee's personal information. For Julia, this means her personal and financial records may be at serious risk of becoming available to data thieves or just plain crooks. Obviously, this is not something the Obama campaign mentioned about Julia when they planned out her life for her.

The next question for Julia is whether she will be eligible for premium or cost-sharing subsidies. Depending on her income, Julia may be eligible for a tax credit designed to defray the cost of purchasing health insurance on the exchange. These credits are both advanceable and refundable, meaning that the IRS will pay them first and verify them later.

My gosh, what a system. This is what some have referred to as "pay and chase." The problem with this method of determining the eligibility for the subsidies is that there is an increased likelihood that applicants will receive larger subsidies than they actually qualify for. For Julia, that could mean, if she receives a subsidy, she could end up owing the IRS money next tax season. That is not a highly advertised element of the exchanges or the subsidy program, but that is the reality people such as Julia will be facing.

Once Julia's plan and potential subsidies are in place, the question then becomes will she have the same quality of health care she had before that she was promised by the President. The Obama administration has made some misleading claims on this front. According to the White House, consumers and States with Federal exchanges will have an average of 53 plans to choose

from. However, this number does not tell the full picture. According to an analysis undertaken by my staff on the Senate Finance Committee, 75 percent of States with Federal exchanges will have fewer plans available than the average touted by the White House.

In addition, there will be fewer provider networks in the exchanges, because in an effort to keep the cost of premiums down, insurers are reducing the number of doctors and hospitals covered by the plans in the exchanges. For example, there is only one insurer in the New Hampshire exchange. Their plan will exclude—get that word "exclude"—10 of the 26 hospitals in the State.

Another example is Blue Cross Blue Shield of California. Their exchange plan also covers only 53 percent of the doctors and 74 percent of the hospitals that are included in their broadest non-exchange plan. According to the New York Times "... many insurers are significantly limiting the choices of doctors and hospitals available to consumers. ... from California to Illinois to New Hampshire and in many states in between, insurers are driving down premiums by restricting the number of providers who will treat patients in their new health plans."

In short, this means that on the exchanges, Julia may very well have fewer choices for health care providers, potentially leaving her with limited access to quality care.

The final question Julia will face on the exchanges is perhaps the most important. I call it the final question, but I am sure there are others. Will Julia have to pay more for her health insurance under the exchanges than she did before this wonderful "Affordable Care Act"?

This, once again, depends on the specifics of Julia's situation. If, like most Americans, Julia previously had employer-provided health insurance, she will likely be paying more for her insurance on the exchange than she did through her employer. While some enrollees may be able to find cheaper insurance through the exchanges, the majority of Americans will pay more for health insurance under the exchanges than they do now.

The Manhattan Institute found that individual market premiums will increase 99 percent for men and 62 percent for women nationwide with the exchanges in place. The bottom line for Julia is that depending on her plan, she may very well end up paying more out of pocket for her health care than she did before ObamaCare was in place.

As you can see, the reality of Julia's experience on the health insurance exchanges does not resemble the pretty picture President Obama painted for her during the campaign. She will almost certainly face a number of difficulties just navigating the process. I do not blame President Obama. He was just told what to say by so-called experts on health care. Those experts have been wrong, wrong, wrong too many times.

In the end, it will likely end up costing Julia more to buy insurance on her exchange. Of course, Julia is not a real person. Her problems are imaginary. However, the problems that real Americans, including people from my State of Utah, will be facing as the exchanges open today are very real, as I have described them. Put simply, these exchanges are going live today with too many unanswered questions and too many unsolved problems.

We should have never gotten to this point. The Obama administration should have acknowledged the ample warnings, signs and problems in the exchanges and heeded the many calls for delay. The administration was all too willing to delay the pain businesses will suffer under ObamaCare. Sadly, the American people got no such special treatment.

All I can say is that those of us in Congress will be watching these exchanges closely. The American people will be watching them too. They will be experiencing them, which may not be very pleasant, in light of the promises that were made to them. If what we have discussed or witnessed so far is any indication, I do not think we or they or Julia will like what we see.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. I come to the floor this afternoon as the chairman of the Intelligence Committee in order to speak about the effect the government shutdown starting to have on the community and what effect it will have if the shutdown continues.

Let me give the most important figure up front. Across the intelligence communities, 72 percent of the civilian workforce is being furloughed. This means that with the exception of a few intelligence agencies that have a significant number of military personnel, the lights are being turned off and the majority of the people who produce our intelligence, analyze that intelligence, and provide warning of terrorist attacks or advise policymakers of major national security events will be prevented from doing their jobs. Simply stated, this is unacceptable. The failure of this Congress to perform its most basic functions means that our country is at heightened risk of terrorist attack.

Intelligence provides this Nation with its first line of defense because long before a threat makes it to our shores, the men and women in our intelligence community learn about it, sound the warnings, and often take the steps to neutralize that threat. Before the President or the Secretary of State makes decisions on U.N. Security Council resolutions, such as a resolu-

tion to end Syria's chemical weapons program, they review the intelligence and they seek the advice of intelligence analysts.

Finding Osama bin Laden in a house in Abbottabad and removing a bomb from an Al Qaeda operative in Yemen aren't things that just happen. They require the dedicated work of a huge array of professionals. Good intelligence requires the following: CIA officers on the ground and around the world meeting with sources; technical wizards who collect signals and imagery information; engineers who put together the systems to bring the information back to Washington and who convert the ones and zeroes of computer code into meaningful, actionable intelligence. Today, 72 percent of the civilian workforce will not be doing these jobs. Our shutdown is the biggest gift we could possibly give our enemies.

I understand and I support continuing to pay our military men and women, operating both at home and abroad, including tens of thousands still deployed to Afghanistan. By furloughing our intelligence workforce, we put our uniformed men and women at risk as they, too, rely on the intelligence agencies to tell them where the next assault may take place or where the next IED is hidden.

We have Ambassadors in threatened capitals. I can guarantee that our Ambassadors in Kabul and Baghdad and Sanaa and Islamabad rely on their intelligence briefers and the tactical intelligence support to their security teams as much as they rely on the marines who guard front gates.

I met earlier this spring with Ambassador Anne Patterson in Cairo. I saw the gates and walls of our modern Embassy that had been overrun by the same crowds protesting down the street in Tahrir Square. I met with the CIA, NSA, and other intelligence officers who give the Ambassador and her team warning when the extremists are looking to try to attack our Embassy again.

Some of these intelligence professionals will obviously remain on duty and are absolutely essential, but by furloughing the majority of the intelligence civilian workforce they rely on, we are preventing them from effectively doing their job.

I spoke yesterday with Director James Clapper, the Director of National Intelligence. At my request, he sent me a short report on how the shutdown will affect the largest intelligence agencies. In addition to the 72 percent overall figure, his report lists how the shutdown will cripple the CIA, the NSA, the Defense Intelligence Agency, the National Geospatial Intelligence Agency, the National Reconnaissance Office, and the Office of the Director of National Intelligence, to include the National Counterterrorism Center.

Every single agency I listed will lose the majority of its civilian workforce. Many of them don't have a sizable

military component that is exempt from the shutdown. The numbers are still classified, but any Senator who wants to see how our failure to fund the government is harming the intelligence community is welcome to find out and read this report. It is in the intelligence office on the second floor of Hart. The intelligence agencies at the Departments of State, Treasury, Energy, and Homeland Security are hit even worse.

I wholly regret that we are in this situation. I regret that across the country national parks are closed and Federal safety inspectors are sidelined. For 4 years we have squeezed the discretionary appropriations levels to the point that every part of the Federal Government has had to cut back and make do with less. What we are doing now puts American lives at risk. It is an abdication of congressional responsibility.

I wanted to come to this floor to make clear to every Member of this body that what we have done directly damages our national security.

I also would like to take the opportunity to speak on some of the cutbacks that are in process in the area of energy and water.

Since 2001 I have served as chairman of three different Appropriations subcommittees: Military Construction and Veterans Affairs, the Interior Department, and today the Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development. Over the years I helped make a lot of tough choices on which programs to fund, which not to fund, et cetera, but never have things been as bad as they are today. The cuts we are making to our appropriations bills under sequestration are strangling programs that must be funded. These are programs that are vital to our country, vital to public safety, and programs that promise to deliver the next breakthroughs in energy research.

I will speak about some of the negative effects a shutdown and continued sequester would have on my subcommittee.

The agency within my subcommittee that may have the most direct impact on the public is the Army Corps of Engineers. The Corps safeguards our dams, our levees, and our drinking water. It keeps our harbors open for cargo ships, and it maintains more than 4,000 recreation sites. Most people don't know that. Simply put, a government shutdown would mean the termination of a wide range of Army Corps of Engineers activities.

Let me mention flood control for a moment. Work is stopping on virtually all construction projects, studies, and activities related to flood control and navigation across this country. These projects protect tens of millions of Americans. A shutdown may mean the Corps stops work on improving dam safety projects, including the dam at California's Isabella Lake, which is the dam most at risk of failure in our State.

Halting these projects endangers citizens and ultimately increases the cost to complete this work. What is more, these projects actually reduce overall costs to the Federal Government. Damage prevented by the Corps' projects—this is only damage prevented—exceeds \$25 billion a year. It is indeed a big deal.

Other Corps projects interrupted by the shutdown includes the strengthening of levees and flood walls to reduce the risk of loss of life and economic loss from flooding and coastal storms.

Work could stop on improvements to flood protection levees along the Mississippi River, levees that experienced record flood levels in 2011.

Projects in Boston, Kansas City, and Seattle could be suspended. Even worse, these construction delays would come at a time when severe storms are causing damage with greater frequency.

Even dam safety projects could be affected by a shutdown.

One example is California's Folsom Dam, where the Corps and the Bureau of Reclamation are working to increase dam safety. A shutdown would likely cause the Corps and Reclamation to suspend contract activities, delaying this vital project.

The Folsom Dam is a major component of the Central Valley Project, which provides clean water to more than 20 million Californians, and should not be put at risk by a government shutdown.

A shutdown will also have dramatic impacts on water-borne commerce.

More than 2.3 billion tons of cargo moves through our marine transportation system. Improvements to channels, harbors and waterways ensure this vital traffic flows without pause.

Projects at Oakland Harbor in California, Savannah Harbor in Georgia, and Charleston Harbor in South Carolina could be impacted by the shutdown, meaning higher construction and transportation costs.

The country's vast system of inland waterways could also suffer from the shutdown.

More than 600 million tons of cargo move through our inland waterways on commercial ships. A shutdown means this cargo could be slowed, and the use of locks would likely not be available at all to recreational boaters.

While facilities on lakes that combine flood control and hydropower should continue to operate because of safety issues, hydropower operations will likely be curtailed.

This means 353 hydropower units operated by the Corps—which provide roughly one-quarter of the country's hydropower—would operate at reduced capacity. This would cut into the \$1.5 billion in payments the units generate each year.

There are also major permitting and operational impacts that will be immediately noticeable.

Processing of regulatory permits under the Clean Water Act, which the Corps handles, will be suspended.

In a typical year, the Corps processes more than 80,000 permit actions. This means anyone from an individual building a dock to a community planning a major development would not be able to move forward because they won't be able to secure a permit.

The Corps will also be unable to provide enforcement actions on existing permitted activities, which could harm sensitive environmental or aquatic resources.

Another visible effect will be the shuttering of recreation areas.

The Corps of Engineers is the largest provider of outdoor recreation among all federal agencies. They maintain more than 4,200 recreation sites at 422 projects in 43 States, with more than 370 million visits each year.

Those visitors spend more than \$18 billion annually and support 350,000 full-time or part-time jobs. All this will be impacted by a government shutdown.

The Department of Energy could also face severe limitations under a shutdown.

Research grants to national labs and universities could be suspended. These grants fund important clean energy challenges related to biofuels, supercomputing, and materials research.

The output of world-class science facilities on cutting edge research and product development may be significantly reduced. With U.S. leadership in science threatened by China, Japan and Europe, now is not the time to suspend major scientific research.

Regarding the national security missions of the National Nuclear Security Administration, a government shutdown may delay important nuclear modernization activities.

A government shutdown may disrupt and delay efforts to replace aging components in every single nuclear weapon in the stockpile. For example, delays in replacing aging components in the W76 submarine—launched warhead—which makes up more than 50 percent of the Nation's nuclear deterrent—would have serious impacts to the Navy's nuclear deterrence mission.

Upgrades to aging infrastructure related to uranium, plutonium and high explosives capabilities would also be delayed. Delays of just days can add millions of dollars to a project's bottom line.

A government shutdown may also delay the design of a new nuclear reactor for the Ohio-class submarine. A shutdown may also delay refueling one of only three training nuclear reactors for sailors, which is critical for supplying sufficient numbers of sailors to man the U.S. submarine fleet.

Lastly, on this matter, the shutdown will delay and increase costs to clean up and remediate nuclear contamination at former nuclear weapons and nuclear energy research sites. These activities should be completed as quickly as possible to protect human health.

Finally, Madam President, I just wanted to say a couple of things about

the much-beleaguered health care plan and what is happening so far.

During the first 3 hours today, the Federal health care Web site—healthcare.gov—with information about exchanges across the country logged 1 million visitors. As of 9:30 this morning, in Kentucky, the health exchange had 24,000 visitors and processed more than 1,000 applications.

I am anxious to provide the west coast numbers, although not able at this time due to the 3-hour time delay.

There were 2 million visits to New York's health exchange during the first 2 hours of the launched site. Even at 11:30, Connecticut had 10,000 visitors and 22 people enrolled.

Let me just end with this one story. Paula Thornhill, a mother of seven who lives in Virginia, was the first to apply for coverage today in her county, which is Prince William. She is quoted as saying: "I am relieved that they did come out with this affordable health care. I am relieved."

So far so good today, and I am hopeful that this tyranny of the minority will end shortly.

I thank the Senator from Louisiana, and I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. MANCHIN). The Senator from Louisiana.

Mr. VITTER. Mr. President, I come back to the Chamber to urge the following. I hope as we try to resolve this important spending bill that a key part of that resolution is to live by existing law under ObamaCare and make sure that Members of Congress and our staff aren't treated far differently and far better than the American people.

That is what the congressional portion of my "No Washington Exemption" bill and amendment is all about. It is a pure and simple principle. I think it is a first principle of democracy, and American democracy should work by that first principle: What is good for America is good for Washington. And what Washington imposes on America, it must live with itself: No special exemptions, privileges, subsidies or rules. The same rules. I think that should be the rule across the board for whatever part of law we are talking about. It should certainly be the rule under ObamaCare.

Indeed, it is the rule under ObamaCare under the statute. What I have been fighting is an illegal regulation promulgated by the Obama administration to get around the clear language and the clear intent of the statute. As the Chair knows, during the ObamaCare debate this issue came up, it was debated, and language was passed here in the Senate and put into the statute. That language says, pure and simple, every Member of Congress and all official congressional staff have to go to the ObamaCare exchanges for their health care, the same as other Americans who are going to the exchange. No special treatment, no special exemption or rules or subsidies. That is the clear language and that was the clear intent.

Amazingly—and I was happy to see it at the time—that language, which I fought hard for, along with many, many others, led on the Senate side by Senator CHUCK GRASSLEY—was adopted. That became part of the statute that passed into law. But, apparently, it was an example of that old NANCY PELOSI quote—we have to pass the law to figure out what is in it—because that language that did pass as part of the ObamaCare statute, when lots of folks on Capitol Hill started reading the details and they got to that section, they said: Oh, you know what. We can't live with this. We can't have this. This is a crisis. This would actually apply—the exchanges—to Members of Congress and our staffs, just as they are applied to millions and millions of other Americans—8-million plus who are losing their previous employer provided health care, against their will, and being forced to go to the exchanges.

So when that happened, after the passage of ObamaCare, furious scheming and lobbying started going on behind the scenes. This included lobbying of the administration. HARRY REID and many others got involved in asking the President to get personally involved to bail Congress out, to prevent this clear statutory language from having its clear force and effect. And sure enough, that worked. President Obama, according to numerous press reports, got personally involved. He literally picked up the phone, had conversations personally with folks in his administration about this rulemaking—pretty unprecedented—and, sure enough, a rule was issued conveniently right after Congress left town at the beginning of the August recess to flee the scene of the crime.

That rule, the so-called OPM rule—completely illegal, in my opinion, because it is contrary to the statute—does two things. First of all, the rule says: Yes, the statute says all Members of Congress and all official congressional staff go to the ObamaCare exchanges for health care, but we don't know who official staff is. We have no idea. We can't figure that out, so we are going to leave it up to each individual Member of Congress to figure out who among their employees is official staff for purposes of this section, and we are never going to second-guess any decision by any Member of Congress, even though this could result in up to 535 different applications of the law.

I think we should all be able to agree that is flat-out ridiculous. The law is written. It is written clearly. It uses the words: Official congressional staff. For OPM to say, through this rule, we can't figure that out, we will leave it up to each individual Member of Congress, is ridiculous, particularly since that would allow a Member saying no one who works for me is “official staff” for purposes of this section. What? They can completely get around the law with regard to staff that way. That is just flat-out ridiculous.

The second thing this illegal OPM rule does is to say that even for Members of Congress and their staff who do go to the exchange for their health care, they get to take with them something that no other American from a big employer in that sort of situation gets to take—they get to take with them their previous Federal Employee Health Benefit Plan subsidy—a huge taxpayer funded subsidy that no other American at that income level would get. That is completely separate treatment not envisioned by the statute in any way, and not mentioned in the statute in any way. In fact, there are plenty of parts in the statute contrary to that. But they get to take that with them to the exchange.

Is that available to any other American in that situation at that income level? Absolutely not. So again, that is flat-out ridiculous and flat out at odds with the clear statutory language and intent of that provision of ObamaCare.

Ever since we came back into session after the August recess and had the opportunity to correct this egregious illegal OPM rule, I have been fighting alongside others to do just that. I have been fighting along with a number of Senate colleagues, and I thank them all for their active involvement. I have also been fighting alongside Congressman RON DESANTIS of Florida, who is leading the House effort, and many, many other House colleagues who are all for this measure.

I want to make clear and underscore, because this is important, that with regard to Members of Congress and staff, this isn't demanding some new law. This isn't demanding some change to ObamaCare. This is saying let us simply live with what the law is. Let us simply live with the clear statutory language. That is what we need to do, and we need to do it because it is fair and right for the American people. We need to do it because Americans are sick and tired, quite frankly, of Washington elites treating themselves like a higher select ruling class.

That is exactly the concept the American revolution was founded on. That is exactly the mindset that led to our breaking away from Britain, which was a monarchy and was governed by that mindset. Yet here we are, as in many other cases, Washington is reintroducing that principle. That is a thoroughly un-American principle. And the first principle of American democracy—and we should affirm it—is that what Washington passes onto America, it lives with itself. Same rules, no special exemptions, no carve-outs, subsidies, or bailouts. What is good for America is good for Washington, and it should be applied equally across the board. Simple concept. Basic concept.

As I said, I would call it the first rule of American democracy, but it is being trampled on in this instance. It is being trampled on as yet again Washington sets itself apart and above the American people as a select elite ruling class. That is wrong, and it is as wrong

as yet another of a number of exemptions from ObamaCare; it is wrong as yet another example of special treatment—a carve-out, waivers, or exemptions.

The President often says: This is the law of the land. He is right. So why don't we apply the law of the land as it is written across the board, no exemptions, no waivers, no illegal rules that are contrary to the clear language and intent of ObamaCare. Why don't we start by applying ObamaCare just as it is being applied to America in Washington. Why don't we start by living by the letter and the spirit of the law in saying all Members of Congress and all congressional staff go to the exchanges for their health care and do not take any special taxpayer funded subsidy with them that is unavailable to any other Americans at that income level.

That would be leadership, and that is what we need to do. That is not changing the law. That is living by the law. We need to do that and we need to do it now as part of any resolution to these spending bill disagreements.

Mr. President, I urge my colleagues to gather around this principle. I urge my colleagues to vote right on this issue. I assure my colleagues they are going to get the chance to vote one way or the other. I am going to continue to demand a clear, clean up-or-down vote on the Senate floor on this issue. We have not had it. I have fought for it for about 4 weeks now. But because of the extraordinary efforts—quite frankly, including threats and intimidation and bribery—of the majority leader, we have not been allowed that clear up-or-down vote. I will assure my colleagues we are going to get it.

I don't know when, I don't know how, because I don't control that, but I am going to make darn sure we are going to get it. And not much, if anything, of substance is going to happen until we do. This is overdue because this goes into effect today.

Mr. President, I yield the floor, and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. MARKEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. MARKEY. Mr. President, I ask to be recognized for 6 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. MARKEY. Mr. President, what we have is the tea party Republicans' version of Elizabeth Kubler-Ross's five stages of grief. More than 40 years ago, Dr. Kubler-Ross laid out the five different emotions experienced by people when they faced what they considered to be an awful, unacceptable fate: Making affordable health care available for millions of Americans is anathema to today's tea party Republicans. They

cannot accept it. They shut down the government to try to stop it.

The tea party Republicans cannot handle the fact that the Affordable Care Act will guarantee that millions more Americans are going to have access to quality, affordable health care coverage; that being a woman is no longer going to be a preexisting condition—women cannot be charged higher insurance rates just because of their gender; no one is going to go bankrupt just because they get sick.

Before the Affordable Care Act, medical bills contributed to more than 60 percent of all personal bankruptcies in the United States. That all ends with ObamaCare, which lifts lifetime caps on insurance coverage. Mr. President, 6.6 million people on Medicare have already saved more than \$7 billion on their prescription medicines. The tea party Republicans are in the grip of the political equivalent of the five stages of grief. It is the American people who are getting squeezed.

The first stage, denial. The tea party Republicans refuse to accept the fact that the Affordable Care Act is the law. They have tried to repeal it more than 50 times. It has been ruled constitutional by the Supreme Court. They ignored last year's Presidential election in which the Republican candidate who promised to repeal the Affordable Care Act if he was elected was soundly defeated. The tea party Republicans deny the decision by the Supreme Court that found the Affordable Care Act constitutional.

The second stage, anger. The tea party Republicans are enraged that the Affordable Care Act is going to work. We know it is going to work because we have 7 years of experience in Massachusetts, where now 97 percent of all adults and 99 percent of all children are covered. We have a poll conducted in April of this year by the Massachusetts Medical Society. It indicates that 84 percent of Massachusetts residents are satisfied with their health care. They like their health coverage under the Massachusetts system, which is the very model of President Obama's plan.

The tea party Republicans cannot stand the fact that the Affordable Care Act will finally make health care a right and not a privilege in our country, in the words of the great Ted Kennedy. The tea party Republicans are so angry about ObamaCare that they closed down the Federal Government today, sending hundreds of thousands of Federal workers home without pay.

The third stage, bargaining. The tea party Republicans are doing a lot of bargaining these days. They are using the entire Federal budget and soon the full faith and credit of the United States as leverage in their negotiation to try to gut ObamaCare. Bargaining rarely provides a sustainable solution, especially in this case. That is because the tea party Republicans do not want to negotiate. They want to eliminate the Affordable Care Act and the benefits it provides to millions of Ameri-

cans. They say they want to bargain, but they don't. They say they want to negotiate, but they don't. They just want elimination of the health care program and that is not going to happen.

The fourth stage, depression. The tea party Republicans are clearly depressed that they are getting blamed for shutting down the government, that public opinion is sharply turning against them and that many Republicans are repudiating their tactics and their extremism. Republicans are fighting amongst themselves, struggling to find a way out of the mess they have made for themselves.

Finally, the fifth stage, acceptance. The tea party Republicans have not yet reached this final stage of acceptance. They still do not fully understand the backlash that they are facing from the public, which will justifiably blame them for the Republican tea party shutdown. The tea party Republicans do not yet regret their destructive ways. They certainly are nowhere near acceptance.

So I say we are witnessing the tea party Republicans in the throes of their grief over losing the last election and losing the battle over health care reform, but it is the American people who are paying the price for this political psychodrama that is tearing the Republican Party apart and hurting our country and hurting the health of millions of Americans in our country. Now is the time for them to get over it. Now is the time for ObamaCare to be the law of the land. It is not going away.

Now is the time to join together to ensure that it works for the American people. Now is the time to move forward to pass a budget that funds our government. Now is the time to get our economy back on track, create jobs, and build a bright future together for all Americans. Now is the time for the tea party Republicans to accept what the American people have voted to make the law of our land and the person whom they voted to make the President of our country.

I yield the remainder of my time.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. NELSON. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. NELSON. Mr. President, I would like to speak about the shutdown that has now occurred.

To say I am outraged is an understatement. What we need is for the folks down there at the other end of the U.S. Capitol Building to open this government. The economy of this country is at risk and they have done it to advance their own narrow extremist agenda.

All of this is due to a relatively small group of lawmakers down in the House

of Representatives—some 40, maybe 60—who are intent on having their own way on a personal agenda. They are refusing to work with their fellow Republicans, as well as Democrats, down in the House of Representatives, and the result is a forced government shutdown that is doing a lot of damage to a lot of people. That is why it is important for the American people to say they have had enough and they want these folks to stop this nonsense.

We ought to be keeping government open, but, we need to consider a couple of things. For example, the National Institutes of Health are now unable to bring in 800 patients they were going to start to give medical treatment in breakthrough medical techniques and developments. At the same time, the National Institutes of Health—one of the premier agencies in all of this alphabet soup of agencies that we talk about—they have had to furlough 70 percent of their civilian workforce.

A few minutes ago, we heard the chairman of the Intelligence Committee, Senator DIANNE FEINSTEIN, explaining that the Director of National Intelligence has told her he has had to furlough 72 percent of the civilians in the intelligence community. That is ridiculous. We have terrorists who are trying to do us harm, and he has had to furlough 72 percent.

Take, for example, NASA. NASA had to furlough 97 percent of its civilian workers in the space program.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

Mr. REID. Would my friend, the distinguished Senator from Florida, yield for a unanimous consent request?

Mr. NELSON. Of course I will. I wish to thank the majority leader for his leadership and for standing firm to stop this nonsense.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I thank my friend. We served together in the House.

FEDERAL AGRICULTURE REFORM AND RISK MANAGEMENT ACT OF 2013

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask that the Chair lay before the Senate a message from the House with respect to H.R. 2642.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair lays before the Senate the following message from the House, which the clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

Resolved, That the House agree to the amendment of the Senate to the bill H.R. 2642, entitled "An act to provide for reform and continuation of agricultural and other programs of the Department of Agriculture through fiscal year 2018, and for other purposes," with an amendment to the Senate amendment.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate disagree in the House amendment and the Senate insist on its amendment, request a conference with the House on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses, and

the Chair be authorized to appoint conferees with a ratio of seven to five on the part of the Senate, all with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Presiding Officer appointed Ms. STABENOW, Mr. LEAHY, Mr. HARKIN, Mr. BAUCUS, Mr. BROWN, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. BENNET, Mr. COCHRAN, Mr. CHAMBLISS, Mr. ROBERTS, Mr. BOOZMAN, and Mr. HOEVEN conferees on the part of the Senate.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that there be a period of morning business for debate only until 6 p.m., with the time equally divided and controlled between the two leaders or their designees; that Senators be permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each for debate only; and at 6 p.m. I ask that I be recognized.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from Florida is recognized.

CONTINUING APPROPRIATIONS

Mr. NELSON. As I understand what the majority leader has just done, the Senate has appointed conferees on the farm bill. That is an example that when there is a political will, we can get together and get things accomplished.

The National Institutes of Health, NASA, and all of the intelligence agencies—72 percent of all the civilians in the intelligence agencies, including the CIA, are furloughed. We are in a war with those people who are trying to do harm to us. We are having these people furloughed all because of a small group, the tea party, in one House of one branch of government who are intent on their agenda. It is irresponsible and reckless.

The truth is, if the Speaker would just bring up what we call the continuing resolution, which is all of the appropriations bills put together up to a date certain, November 15, it would pass overwhelmingly with Democrats and Republicans both voting for it, not the extremist small group down there, but the Speaker doesn't bring it up.

What I see happening—if this lasts for more than a day or two—is that the American people will be so irritated and upset that their lives are disrupted because they can't get government services they are going to insist that their government open once again.

I have an example. The fine work the people I have the privilege of working with and what they do for the people of my State never ceases to amaze me. It is not unusual when I am going into a meeting or airport or walking down the street when I am in the State of Florida, it is commonplace for people to come up and say to me: I want you to know that I appreciate so much what you did to help me or my mother or my son or my brother who is a veteran.

When they say those things, they are talking about all of these dedicated people whom I have the great privilege of working with to help the people of our State on the day-to-day necessities of their daily lives, such as an emergency situation, they realize their passport has expired or they lost their passport or didn't get their veterans payment or need help getting their brother into a veterans hospital or something happened to their Social Security payment or they need information about this particular piece of legislation or they are concerned about somebody they saw whom they thought was doing things and they need them to be referenced to the correct agency on a security matter. It goes on and on.

These wonderful people we have working with us—some young, some old—many of the ones who have been with me for years are so dedicated and work day and night. They work their fingers to the bone. They know exactly whom to call or to e-mail to get things done for people back home in need. We know what is going to happen. When they call any one of our offices in Florida, they are going to get a recording of my voice, telling them what has happened and how all of these folks have been furloughed and giving them an emergency contact as the one lifeline we can provide.

What happens next? If reasonable people were doing this, we would have never shut down in the first place—people who are bipartisan, who have some common sense, who recognize we can't have it our way all the time but in the best of American tradition respect the other fellow's point of view and then work out differences to achieve a consensus in order to gain a workable solution. If those kinds of reasonable folks had been operating, then we would never have shut down in the first place.

We have heard about this over and over in the speeches today: I voted for, in the Budget Committee, a budget. It came out of committee and came to the floor. We had over 100 amendments. It took hours and hours. We finally passed a budget which was the outline for the appropriations for the next fiscal year. We passed that in the Senate 6 months ago. The House did the same. They passed out a budget. But when we asked to go to a conference committee to get agreement for working out the differences between the two, that small group would not let the conference not only not convene but even be appointed.

I think the majority leader of the Senate will tell us we are ready to meet right now, but they have to open the government again. We have to put back to work these people who are trying to serve the American people and to protect the American people. Hopefully, if the American people hear these messages, they will get sufficiently agitated and insist that, once again, the crowd that has shut us down instead should open the government.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota.

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Mr. President, I come to the floor today to call for an end to the senseless government shutdown and urge Members of the House to set aside political games for the betterment of the country.

The American people are tired of our country being held hostage and our economic recovery threatened just to score political points, and justifiably so. There are real consequences for this irresponsibility.

Shutting down the government for 3 or 4 weeks would reduce real gross domestic product by 1.4 percentage points in the fourth quarter alone, and a shutdown longer than 2 months would likely precipitate another recession.

But my colleagues don't have to take my word for it. Here is what the U.S. Chamber of Commerce said in a letter on this very topic: . . . "it is not in the best interests of the U.S. business community or the American people to risk even a brief government shutdown that might trigger disruptive consequences or raise new policy uncertainties washing over the U.S. economy."

David Cote, the chief executive officer of Honeywell, stated that if you want to create economic disruption and uncertainty for businesses, then a government shutdown is a great way to do it.

I couldn't agree more.

The truth is we simply can't afford another self-inflicted wound to our economy, especially not at a time when things are finally turning around. We had big news in our State this month. The unemployment rate is down to 5.1 percent. National unemployment is at 7.3 percent. That is the lowest point since December of 2008. The housing market is bouncing back with existing home sales reaching a 6½ year high in August. Retail sales are up, and so far this year we have added 1.5 million private sector jobs. We are not where we need to be, but we are moving in the right direction and it is clear that now is not the time to take a step back. Yet here we are again, right in the middle of another manufactured crisis.

On Friday, the Senate passed a bill to keep the government running that is free of any ideological policy provisions. The Senate bill would fund the government at the same level as last year through November 15 and would give Congress and the President time to negotiate a balanced deficit reduction plan.

The commonsense next step would be for the House to take up and pass the Senate's bill. That is democracy. They should put the bill before the House and, by most beliefs, it would pass and it would end the shutdown. Instead, the House has sent us four separate versions of the legislation with full knowledge that the Senate would not agree to them and the President stating he would veto them. Each of the House proposals would have delayed

implementation of the Affordable Care Act.

So here we stand with the Federal Government shut down just so the House Republicans could again attempt to relitigate a law that both the House and the Senate passed, the President signed, and the Supreme Court upheld.

That doesn't mean there will be no changes to the law going forward. I know the Presiding Officer, the Senator from the great State of West Virginia, has some ideas and I have some ideas, but they must be made in a rational manner, not as part of poison pill partisanship.

House Republicans don't seem to understand or they choose not to care about the negative impact on businesses and families that a government shutdown would have. Here are some examples of how my State will be impacted, and I know the Senator from Delaware, Mr. COONS, is here, and I know he has some examples as well. This is the story in Minnesota: According to the Small Business Administration, in 2012 their loan programs approved 53,847 applications and supported 571,383 jobs for an average of just over 1,000 applications per week. What does this mean for Minnesota? Well, my State is home to 115,000 small businesses, and I wish to ensure that the SBA loans keep coming through.

All lands managed by the National Park Service in Minnesota would be closed. They are closed. These include Voyageurs National Park, the Mississippi National River and Recreation Area, the North Country National Scenic Trail, the Pipestone National Monument, and the Saint Croix National Scenic Riverway. Closure of the parks would result in the loss of tourism revenue. Last year, more than 600,000 visitors enjoyed these parks, an average of more than 1,600 visitors per day. According to the National Park Service in 2011, visits to these parks in Minnesota contributed \$37 million in economic benefits and generated 665 jobs in my State.

In a State such as Minnesota, where tourism is our fifth largest industry and the source of 11 percent of our private sector revenue, we simply can't afford for this to happen. We simply cannot afford for this critical industry to be hamstrung by political posturing.

In the shutdown, the Food and Drug Administration will furlough 7,000 people, roughly 55 percent of the agency's workforce. That means the process for approving life-saving drugs and treatments and devices—something that matters a lot in my State—would grind to a halt, and shipments arriving at our ports from overseas will no longer be monitored by the FDA.

The shutdown also has the potential to slow down research at the Mayo Clinic. The bulk of Mayo's funding for research comes from the National Institutes of Health grants.

In the government shutdown, 70 percent of NIH staff is shut out, as Senator MIKULSKI has said on this floor

many times, 70 percent of the National Institutes of Health staff. That represents about 19,000 American scientists, researchers, and others who are working to develop a cure for Alzheimer's, working to develop a cure for muscular dystrophy, working to develop a cure for autism.

Staff from the Mayo Clinic said if the government shuts down, the NIH will not be reviewing new grant proposals, and that is starting today.

In addition, it means funding for recently approved grant projects won't be released, and new patients will not be admitted to the NIH Clinical Center or allowed to begin new clinical trials.

We must also be willing to do the right thing for the safety of our people. That is, all in all, in my belief as a former prosecutor, the No. 1 duty of government—to keep our people safe. When it comes to homeland security, counterterrorism, and Federal law enforcement, rest assured those protections will continue, but in the event of a shutdown, the Federal officers who continue going to work protecting the public from violent crimes, gangs, and terrorists won't be getting a paycheck. Instead, they will be getting an IOU. So basically what we will be saying to these people, and what we are saying as of midnight last night, is: Thank you for putting your lives on the line but we can't pay you right now because there are some people in the House who want to delay the Affordable Health Care Act, and if you are lucky, maybe you will get backpay when all this is sorted out.

My colleagues in the House like to talk a big game about how uncertainty is hindering real economic growth. I believe uncertainty hinders economic growth. So it is quite ironic that they are now creating this economic uncertainty and are willing to threaten our economy on a political gamble.

Shutting down the government is not a negotiating tactic. If the House were to take up the Senate bill to fund the government, it is expected to pass and the shutdown would end. During that time, over the next 6 weeks, it will give us that time to truly negotiate a long-term debt deal done in a balanced way. Instead, critical services and the economic recovery are being threatened with poison pill partisanship.

To my colleagues in the House and in the Senate, I say this: Let's get this done. We owe it to the people we were elected to serve. We owe it to the country. Let's end this government shutdown now.

Thank you, Mr. President. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Delaware.

Mr. COONS. Mr. President, today is October 1. Today is the day that has long been known as the day when the Affordable Care Act will first come into force and exchanges across the country will begin to be open to citizens of all different backgrounds and walks of life for them to seek afford-

able, accessible insurance on these exchanges, the next step in the implementation of the Affordable Care Act. On one level, it is a good day, because tens of millions of Americans are today gaining access to quality affordable care. I am told that since midnight, nearly 3 million people visited healthcare.gov, 80,000 or more have called a hotline, and 60,000 have requested live chats for applications, and enrollment in these marketplaces is moving forward at a record pace. So, on some level, this is an important day, because millions of Americans across dozens of States are getting access to quality affordable health care.

On the other hand, as the Presiding Officer well knows, this is an embarrassing, difficult, and disappointing day. The Federal Government of the United States is shut down. As of midnight last night, the President, the Office of Management and Budget, directed all the different executive agencies and offices to begin shutting down. As a result, 800,000 Federal employees are spending today at home—not helping small businesses with loans from the SBA; not helping move forward grants that invest in improving our infrastructure; not moving forward federally funded research that might find a cure for cancer or for MS or for autism; not helping applicants get college loans; not helping disabled veterans get access to the benefits they earned through their service to our country. We could go on and on about all the different ways these Federal employees—these public servants—are today not able to help our constituents, our fellow citizens.

I have gotten a fair number of contacts today—phone calls to my office, e-mails to my office, folks connecting with me on Facebook or through Twitter, or directly or indirectly, to convey how frustrated and upset they are.

I want to try to put all of this in some context for the folks who might be watching. What is it we are fighting over? As best I can understand, a few Members of this body and a few Members of the House of Representatives have shut this government down in an effort to try to stop the implementation of the Affordable Care Act. That is what this is all about. They have refused to take up and pass a bill that would fund the continuation of the U.S. Federal Government. In so doing, they are doing about \$10 billion a week in damage to our economy. They are doing all of that damage I referred to in terms of hundreds of thousands of Federal employees not able to help improve our communities or keep us safe or move our country forward.

So why are we doing this? I think it has been said for many years that the definition of "insanity" is doing the same thing over and over and expecting a different result. Well, the House of Representatives has tried to repeal the Affordable Care Act I think 42 times now.

As best I understand, this bill, which was passed by both Chambers and

signed into law and then challenged at length in the Supreme Court and upheld and then was the central issue of the last Presidential election, which was not particularly close, this law of the land, which is moving forward in its implementation today, will not be stopped by shutting down the Federal Government.

This is a strategy that never really had a serious chance of success. Despite very long, quasi-filibuster speeches on this floor, despite all sorts of public pronouncements, this strategy has no chance actually of working. So what is the point? Why is this Federal Government shut down? It seems to me that it is simply a demonstration of a temper tantrum, a fit by a small number of folks who promised people back home that they will not allow this government to go forward with the Affordable Care Act.

I think what we should be doing instead is working together across the aisle to improve the Affordable Care Act. It is not perfect. Of course it has blemishes. There will be hiccups and there will be inconsistencies and issues that need to be worked out as this law is implemented. We ought to be working together across the aisle, the Senate and House together, to make sure it is done in an affordable, sustainable, and positive way rather than a small minority digging in their heels and imposing all of this wreckage for their own partisan goal.

Let me share some of the thoughts I have gotten from folks at home who are not exactly happy about our having a Federal Government shutdown today.

First, Ray White of Ellendale, DE, wrote:

I am a veteran and a US government employee. The furlough and sequester we already went through back in August of this year cost me 20 percent of my paycheck for over a month, causing my bills to get out of control. I would like to know how to make ends meet when I have no money to pay my bills, and lawmakers in the Capitol want to put me out of work again.

To Ray and your family, I am sorry. I am sorry for the fact that we have a few folks in the House of Representatives who will not take up a bill to keep our government open. As the Senator from Minnesota recently related, if the Speaker of the House would just let that bill get to the floor, it would pass. There are more than enough Democrats and Republicans in the House to pass that bill if the House would just take it up. I don't think there is any question who caused this shutdown and why.

CWO2 Christopher Slicer of Newark wrote me to say:

As a federal technician and Army National Guardsman, I find it ridiculous that those we have elected as our representatives cannot do their jobs. If I wasn't doing my job, I would be fired or reprimanded. There is no excuse. I don't care which party it is for not passing whatever it is that needs to be done to have a budget. For our government to shut down shows how incompetent our government is to the world and worse its own

citizens. There are thousands of us federal employees who have had to endure furloughs already, and you are telling me that we may have more.

Well, to CWO Christopher Slicer, I apologize that this Congress is unable to come together across this partisan divide and that we have another needless, manufactured crisis that just a few irresponsible Members insisted on to make a partisan point.

I think CWO Christopher Slicer makes a particularly important point: that this government shutdown shows our weaknesses in our inability to get together across this partisan divide not just to our citizens but to the world. At a time of real instability and real threat to our national security around the world, I think this government shutdown is not just harmful to our communities, our families, and our economy, but to our country and its standing in the world.

Last I will read, if I might, a note from Laurie Tonkay of Dover. Laurie wrote me to say:

It seems like we just got through the government furloughs and now there is a good chance you're going to shut down the government.

This came yesterday.

My husband is employed with the Civil Service on Dover Air Force Base. This makes it difficult for ordinary families to make ends meet. I am getting discouraged with the way things are being done in Washington these days. America is in debt because we overspend, then you make your average hard-working employees pay the price for it repeatedly.

She concludes:

Morale is low, and frankly, I have lost confidence in the bureaucracy. I wonder if things would be different if this were an election year. Would you shut the government down? I think not. Show you care and get something done now.

Well, to Laurie, I am sorry for the impact this shutdown has had on you and your family. But it is the result of a few irresponsible Members of the House of Representatives. If the Speaker would just put on the floor for a vote what has been passed here in the Senate, we would have a government reopened today and we could get back to the business of this country. We could get back to conference on the budget and make progress on investing in making our communities safer, our families stronger, our schools and our students better educated, and doing the investment in our infrastructure and research we need to move our economy forward.

Let me conclude by sharing this. I have a number of wonderful folks on my staff who work in my offices in Delaware and in Washington whose real focus is constituent service. If folks call my office and they have a problem or an issue at home that we need to help with, they do an amazing job.

One young man, Brendan Mackie, recently joined my staff. He is a two-tour veteran of Afghanistan and Iraq. He works tirelessly to make sure the vet-

erans who contact my office get the help they need.

A staff sergeant recently contacted us. He was wounded in Baghdad in 2007 by an IED. He lost the documentation for his Purple Heart. Well, Brendan dove right in and did all sorts of work—collected sworn statements and medical records, submitted everything to the relevant Army review board—and has managed to get his Purple Heart reissued.

That is the kind of case work my folks do day in and day out, making sure that whether it is accessing veterans' benefits or disability benefits, Social Security, or medals earned in service to this Nation in combat, the men and women of Delaware who contact my office and rely on me and their services for great constituent support can get that help. Sadly, Brendan is home today and not able to serve the people of Delaware, not able to do his job.

If I might, I would close by saying this: This is the latest in a series of manufactured crises, of completely senseless, self-inflicted wounds. It is up to the Speaker of the House and to the folks in the House of Representatives to take up and pass the bill we sent them days ago that would allow this government to reopen and allow the leaders of this Chamber and the other Chamber to move forward on dealing with the real issues facing our country.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, it appears the Republicans understand finally that the government is shut down, but now they are focusing on trying to cherry-pick some of the few parts of government they like. They do not like it all, but they like a few parts of it. Just another wacky idea from the tea party-driven Republicans. You can tell that the tea party Republicans still want to keep the government shut down. If they wanted to reopen the government, they would simply reopen the government by bringing the Senate's bill to their floor and letting it pass with a majority vote. We could reopen the government in a matter of minutes if Speaker BOEHNER had the courage to stand up to the tea party.

I said the word "we"—they.

We support veterans and parks. We support the FBI. We support the Federal Government. That is our job. That is what we do. But we cannot and we will not be forced to choose between parks and cancer research or disease control or highway safety or the FBI or, as we have heard here today, on and on with examples from the National Security Agency, which has cut by more than 70 percent its personnel. The Republicans seem willing to fund veterans, but what about the rest of the government?

First, we need to end the government shutdown and then Democrats will be happy to agree on funding for specific items. We would be glad to do that. We

would be happy to agree to fund priorities as soon as Congress enacts legislation to reopen the government.

The Republican plan is not a serious plan. It is not a plan to run the country. It is not a plan the American people sent us here to do. This is just as clear as the Presiding Officer seated before me—wide-shouldered, Former Governor of West Virginia, someone who has been in government for many decades. It is so clear, here is what it is all about. They have it in words.

Here is their plan. Some of the rabble-rousers over there have said what they want to do, which is take little bits and pieces of the Federal Government, send something over for veterans today, parks tomorrow, maybe security agencies tomorrow and the next day, and this will go on for weeks. Well, what will not get funded? ObamaCare. Now, it is so obvious. In fact, one of the Senators said this. In fact, I am paraphrasing part of this. This appeared in the Salt Lake Tribune.

It is obvious we cannot end ObamaCare, so we are going to have a different approach.

In light of the fact they cannot end ObamaCare, here is the quote: "In light of that, let's leave ObamaCare for another day and not hold hostage the vast majority of government functions."

The Utah Republican has claimed credit for kick-starting the effort to use the Federal budget as leverage to halt funding for ObamaCare—a move that led to the impasse and the government shutdown. So they could not do that, so now what they want to do is nitpick these little things while the government is shut down and wait until the end and there is nothing for ObamaCare in spite of the fact that millions of people now have health care today that they did not have yesterday because of the exchanges coming online.

We need to reopen the government. The key to that still remains over in the House of Representatives. It is the Senate-passed clean bill for the whole government. If Republicans were serious, they would pass that bill. Doing anything else is just sour grapes. This is not serious. The government is shut down. If they think they are going to come and nitpick us, it will not work. It will not work.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New York.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, the latest Republican proposal is a cynical one that pits important priorities against each other. People should not have to choose between health for our veterans and cancer research. We should not have to choose between keeping our highway projects going and cleaning up toxic waste areas. We should not have to choose between visiting our national parks and enrolling our kids in Head Start.

As we said a thousand times, we are happy to discuss how to fund the government but not with a gun to our

head. Open up all of the government, and then we can have a fruitful discussion.

You know, it gets a little tiresome. It is game after game, gambit after gambit from the other side of the aisle. They keep trying new things, new tricks. Some of them have to do with ObamaCare, and some of them are unrelated to ObamaCare. They are trying as they might, Speaker BOEHNER, to wriggle out—Speaker BOEHNER is trying to wriggle out of the box in which he has put himself. On the one hand, he knows shutting down the government is highly unpopular and hurts America. On the other, he is so used to giving obeisance to the hard right that he is afraid not to. He is betwixt and between.

But I will tell you, today was a bad day for Speaker BOEHNER and those who want to shut the government down. Polling data is overwhelming. Americans 3 to 1 support opening the government even if it means keeping ObamaCare going.

Americans think that the Republican Party is being irresponsible and not living up to what it should be doing. Americans are telling Republicans in the House: Vote now. Open the government by putting a clean continuing resolution funding bill on the floor.

They will have new games, but we are not going to go for them. Sooner or later, they are going to have to say: OK, we will fund the government. Then we will discuss things, but—as has been said over and over—not with a gun to our heads.

Democratic unity is as strong as ever, from 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue to just about every Member of the House of Representatives and to all 54 Members of this united Democratic Caucus. This is great because it means that there is hope.

The bad news about today is, of course, that many innocent people were hurt. There are 800,000 Federal workers who depend on paychecks to feed their families and they were told they can't come in to work. They are dedicated to their jobs. They want to come in to work. They can't and, of course, they are not getting paid.

Millions more are affected as well. We had furloughs at the Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station in Buffalo of defense employees, many of them civilian. We fought hard to keep that base open. Now we are telling the people: Go home, you can't work today—as important as that base is to the security of America.

Senator FEINSTEIN was here earlier. Three-quarters of our intelligence people at the NSA are not working. That is an abstract concept, but it relates to every single one of us and our security.

The idea of shutting this government down may sound good to the hard right in the abstract, but even when their constituents learn of what specifically it means, they are going to run away from that concept.

To my colleagues, particularly from Texas, the junior Senator from Texas,

who has evidently come up with this new plan, face it. The Senator is not going to get us to give in to extortion. The Senator is not going to take as hostage millions of innocent Americans and succeed in getting us to do something that he wants but we don't and they don't.

I saw in the Salt Lake City paper that the junior Senator from Utah said: Maybe we should forget about ObamaCare and look to spending cuts.

Well, good morning. That is what we have been saying all along. We may not like the spending cuts in certain areas that they proposed, but we are willing to discuss them. That is how a budget works, how appropriations works, and how our government is run. But to take an extraneous issue and to say unless we get rid of it, they are going to shut down the government, no way.

I wish to tell my colleagues if they think they are having a rough time here on shutting down the government in terms of the politics, in terms of where people are, and in terms of their base of support, wait until they try to shut down the debt ceiling.

Senator CRUZ, Senator LEE, it is going to be 10 times worse. The dangers are even greater to America. The pressure on all of us will be even more severe, and that will not work either.

I have a simple suggestion. Let's in one fell swoop fund the government, allow the government to pay its bills, and begin debating the spending issues that we should justly debate instead of putting America through these paroxysms because they know, we know, and the American people know they will not succeed.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, we were notified just after lunch of the new strategy that is coming out of the Cruz control that we are facing on Capitol Hill.

It turns out that Senator CRUZ is going to pick and choose those departments of government that he wishes to open. That's right. The junior Senator from Texas is going to go through his priority list of Federal agencies that he thinks should be open and funded.

We closed down virtually all of them at midnight and, sadly, some 800,000 Federal workers have been furloughed across the United States, some of them going home without a paycheck for as long as this goes on.

The height of irresponsibility is that the junior Senator from Texas now wants to pick and choose those agencies he wishes to reopen. One of those agencies, not surprisingly, is the Department of Veterans Affairs. Of course, we owe that obligation to our veterans. They wish to open the Department of Veterans Affairs, but perhaps not other departments.

Let me remind the Senator from Texas of a couple of realities. They may fund the Department of Veterans Affairs with a short-term appropriations bill, but this bill will not help

bring back the paychecks of the 546,000 veterans who currently work for the Federal Government—546,000, over half a million.

To help the Department of Veterans Affairs, they are ignoring half a million or more veterans who are Federal workers. More than one in four Federal workers is a veteran and more than a quarter of veterans employed by the Federal Government are disabled.

The Senator from Texas is picking and choosing those veterans he wants to help. The disabled veterans working for our Federal Government are not going to get the help. Those working at the Department of Veterans Affairs will.

This is the height of irresponsibility, and it is the height of arrogance. Then, of course, he decides, since he has heard all the speeches about all the national parks that have been closed, we are going to open the national parks. That is a good thing. I would support that.

But let me ask the Senator from Texas—who is now deciding what is important in our Federal Government—does he think maybe the medical research at the National Institutes of Health is important? Does he think maybe the efforts that these scientists and doctors are undertaking to find cures for diseases, the next drug, the next medical device, the next surgical technique to save his life or the life of someone he loves is important? You bet it is.

The list goes on and on. It is reckless for the junior Senator from Texas to decide: Well, OK, tomorrow veterans and national parks. Then maybe later on we will get around to medical research, or maybe we will get around to criminal administration in the Department of Justice.

Maybe we will get around to bringing the people back to the intelligence agencies who are monitoring terrorists all over the world who threaten the United States.

I sure hope we make the wish list of Senator CRUZ when it comes to our national security. To think that this Senator has the nerve to try to decide what is really, really important for America—I will state what is important for America. It is important to end this irresponsibility and this recklessness.

It is important to realize these are real lives and real people doing work for the United States of America. Using them as political pawns is an embarrassment. It is an embarrassment to this institution and those who are pushing this agenda. We know this problem can be cured and solved in a matter of moments.

If Speaker JOHN BOEHNER would have the nerve to put the spending bill that passed the Senate on the floor of the House of Representatives, it would pass in a minute. The Speaker knows it would. That is why he will not call it.

Mr. REID. Will the Senator yield for a question?

Mr. DURBIN. I yield to the Senator.

Mr. REID. Through the Chair I say to my friend from Illinois, during all this prioritization that they are doing, this agency and that agency, the government is closed, isn't it? The government is closed.

Mr. DURBIN. That is correct. As of midnight, the notice went out that the government agencies were closed. There are some that are doing important jobs that are absolutely essential—air traffic control, for example—but the agencies of government have been closed.

Please listen to Senator MIKULSKI of Maryland. I wish Senator CRUZ would come to the floor and spend a few minutes listening to her about the National Institutes of Health and the Centers for Disease Control, which due to this reckless strategy by the Republicans, have closed today. Really? Closing the doors on medical research in the United States of America. What a moment of great pride for the tea party to be able to claim they closed down the National Institutes of Health.

Now they are going to pick and choose. Maybe it will make the list. Perhaps not this week but next week we will get back into the business of medical research. On the greatest Nation on Earth we are facing this. It not only makes the Nation look bad around the world, it harms our economy. Think about it for a moment.

How much confidence would you have in the United States of America if its government is capable of shutting down, over a political squabble that is totally unnecessary, shutting down the government of the United States of America. What a source of pride for the tea party Republicans but not for the rest of America.

The rest of America knows that we need to roll up our sleeves and solve our problems. We have to stop these doomsday scenarios, these threats, this irresponsible, reckless strategy from the tea party Republicans.

It is time for the Speaker of the House of Representatives not only to lead the Republicans in the House but to be a leader for America. It is time for all of us to come together, to fund this government, and move it forward today—not tomorrow, not next week, not beyond and more.

When it comes to the debt ceiling, it is the full faith and credit of the United States that is at stake. The question is very basic. Will America pay its bills?

These same Members of Congress who voted for the spending now refuse to pay the bills. As Congressman Obey of Wisconsin used to say: They want to pose for holy pictures. Oh, yes, we voted for the spending, but we don't want to pay for it. We are not going to vote for a debt ceiling. My goodness, the word "debt" scares us and it may scare the voters.

They would see the United States default for the very first time in our history on our debts, fail to make payments on our debts.

What is the practical impact of that if families decide not to pay their debts, to skip a mortgage payment. They are going to meet their banker. They are going to call them and say: Pardon me, Senator, did you notice that you didn't make your mortgage payment? If you didn't notice, we did. It is going on your credit report. The next time you try to borrow money it is going to be at a higher interest rate because you are not very creditworthy.

Now multiply that into a nation of more than 300 million people. The next time we start to borrow the money after we have defaulted on our debt for the first time in history, what is going to happen to America's credit rating? Interest rates will go up.

Well, so what. A slight tick up in the interest rate paid by America for its debt consumes billions of dollars that could be spent on education, on research, and on building America's infrastructure. This is wasted money because of this wasteful strategy from tea party Republicans.

Over and over Speaker BOEHNER has sent us these bills to defund ObamaCare. Why were they so desperate to stop health care reform? Because October 1, today, is a big, big day across America. For the very first time we are providing Internet access to uninsured Americans so they can have, maybe for the first time in their lives, a chance to buy health insurance. Some of them have never, ever been protected by health insurance. Now they may have a chance at affordable health insurance. In the State of Illinois, 1.8 million uninsured people get a chance, a chance to buy health insurance that they can afford.

I heard at lunch today that more than 2 million people visited this Web site in the State of New York this morning. Do you think there is a pent-up demand for health insurance? It also is an indication of why tea party Republicans are in a fevered state over ObamaCare coming online.

This is going to work. It is going to finally give peace of mind and health insurance protection to people who have lived a lifetime without it.

I have met them, folks who have a child with diabetes, a child with a mental illness, a child with asthma. This is fairly common. These are people who can't get health insurance because some member of their family has a preexisting condition. ObamaCare finally wipes that off the slate and says they can't discriminate against people because of preexisting conditions. Well, you listen to Senator CRUZ and others, and they say we want to do away with that protection.

I hope the Senator never has to face that in his own family. Some of us have. And once you have faced it, you realize what a heartbreak it is not to be able to buy health insurance because of a preexisting condition of someone whom you love in your family.

We are going to change that with ObamaCare. We are going to give people a chance to buy health insurance, and that is what frightens these Republicans—the notion, as that program takes root and grows in America, and people have the confidence and peace of mind of health insurance protection, it is going to be a program they cannot wipe away with the back of their hand.

So all of the things we are seeing, the political gymnastics coming from Senator CRUZ and the tea party Republicans notwithstanding, we know the bottom line is this: This is a good, strong Nation, where Democrats and Republicans need to work together to solve our problems together, not with threats, not with guns to our heads, but with a common purpose of serving this great Nation.

I am troubled that now we are going to get the Senator CRUZ list of his favorite agencies. He starts with the Veterans' Administration. Let him start with the Federal workforce, where over 500,000 members are actual veterans and a quarter of them disabled. If he really cares about veterans, have him call the Speaker. Let's get this government up and running again tomorrow. We can reflect on what happened during the last 24 hours if we do, but let's not continue this embarrassment to the United States. It is irresponsible, it is reckless, it is damaging to our economy and a lot of innocent people. We need to put an end to this government shutdown.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Mississippi.

Mr. COCHRAN. Mr. President, I regret also we are now experiencing a partial shutdown of our Federal Government. Through no fault of their own, some citizens who are visiting Washington are also being denied government services and access to memorials that their tax dollars support. I hope we can soon eliminate any inconvenience that is being caused by this shutdown for visitors and citizens who planned trips into our Nation's Capital.

The effects of the shutdown are real and they are being felt in practical ways, well beyond the Nation's Capital. But certainly here in Washington we witnessed an example of the unintended and sometimes absurd consequences of the Congress and the President's inability to reach an agreement.

Today, for example, a large group of World War II veterans from my State of Mississippi caught an early flight from Gulfport to Washington as part of the Honor Flight program. These flights allow veterans who might not have the ability to come here on their own to visit the national World War II Memorial that was built to honor their brave service—service that saved the world from some of the greatest evils ever known. Confronted with barricades, however, that were erected this morning around the open-air memorial, as a part of the shutting down of the

Federal Government, the citizens from my State carefully removed the barriers and made a path so they were able to walk on to the memorial and lay a wreath beneath the memorial's Mississippi column.

I am very pleased the visit of these veterans to Washington was not ruined by the government shutdown, even though there were some obstacles. But I hope their experience reminds all of us—Federal agencies, Members of Congress, and others who live here in the Nation's Capital—to not make this situation more difficult than it has to be for veterans or other visitors who are coming to the city. For some this may be the only time in their life they will be able to do that.

So I take this opportunity to thank the veterans from our State for their calm, cool, and collected demeanor during what could have been a frustrating experience, and I salute all veterans for their service to our Nation and the access they have even on a day where the agencies are "closed." There are certain premises that should remain open and available for visitation and visibility.

I thank the Honor Flight volunteers for their calm, cool, and collected demeanor and their support for the freedoms of our country. I am sure they will all receive a very warm welcome tonight when they return home to Gulfport.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, let me thank the distinguished Senator from Mississippi for his remarks about these Honor Flight veterans. We just had a group come down from Rhode Island, including one gentleman who was 100 years old. It was so meaningful for them. In Rhode Island, it is particularly the fire chiefs and the firefighters who have been helping to organize these honor flights, and Chief George Farrell and others took immense pleasure and meaning out of having brought these gentlemen down and enabling them to have this recognition.

The tide of time is sweeping that "greatest generation" into its dying years, and while they are still among us, it is a wonderful thing to do. So I thank the Senator from Mississippi for that.

I came to the floor to, I guess, say: Welcome to tea party shutdown, day 1. We do not know how long this is going to go, but it is already having, I will say, miserable impact in Rhode Island.

We have as many as 7,000 Federal employees facing furlough. We just got word that at Naval Station Newport 800 men and women have been furloughed. Our Rhode Island National Guard let us know they are anticipating 300 furloughs. These are people who work hard for our Federal Government. They do important jobs, particularly with respect to the National Guard and Naval Station Newport. They support our troops. It is not fair to them that

the tea party extremists over in the House would insist on putting them out of work in order to force a way around the constitutional process of government here in Congress.

The key to putting those 7,000 Rhode Islanders, the 800 Naval Station Newport, the 300 civilian guardsmen employees, back on the job is a very simple one, and it is in the hands of Speaker BOEHNER. All he has to do is call up the continuing resolution. All he has to do is take the measure the Senate passed and put it before the House for a vote. Just give it a vote. That is all it takes.

Why does he not do that? He doesn't do that because there is this peculiarity over in the House called the Hastert rule. It is not a real rule; it is just called that. It is a practice. It is a practice named after former Republican Speaker Dennis Hastert. The practice is that if your own caucus won't agree on a bill—if the Republicans, all by themselves in a room with no Democrats present, won't agree on a bill—then the Speaker won't even give Democrats a chance to vote on it. It will never come to the floor. It is the most partisan rule or practice that exists in this body, in my estimation, and it has been a problem for the Republicans before. There have been times when Speaker BOEHNER has had to use that key he has to simply put a measure before the body without clearing that partisan prescreening by his Republicans. He has done it over and over to protect the Republican Party from itself, when they were going to force choices that would be terrible for the country and terrible for the party, ultimately.

The first was on the fiscal cliff. Remember the hair's-breadth antics that led up to the fiscal cliff? Well, finally, Speaker BOEHNER put the fiscal cliff bill to a vote in the House and it passed 2 to 1. The Republicans voted against it in the caucus, so we know it flunked the Hastert rule test. But it passed the House with a bipartisan vote of Republicans and Democrats, and it spared us then from going off the fiscal cliff.

That was the right call for the Speaker to make. It was the right call for the country. It was the right call for his party because they didn't want to own that debacle and he made a good decision at that time.

The next was the Violence Against Women Act. Over and over we have passed the Violence Against Women Act in bipartisan fashion in the Senate, and it has been passed in bipartisan fashion over in the House. We passed it again in bipartisan fashion in the Senate, but it was going to fail in the House. Well, how do you go back to your voters, if you are a reasonable House Member, and say: We refused for the first time to pass the Violence Against Women Act? It came over in bipartisan fashion from the Senate. It had strong support here, but we refused to pass it.

Well, they couldn't.

So once again Speaker BOEHNER waived the so-called Hastert rule—this practice of having to have his caucus have a pre-veto on anything that comes to the floor—and he brought the Violence Against Women Act to the floor, and once again it passed. It passed with Democratic and Republican support.

The third time was the disaster bill for Sandy. Many of our States were hit darn hard by Sandy. New York and New Jersey took really crushing blows. But the House Republicans didn't want to fund this particular disaster recovery. In fact, they voted 3 to 1 against it—3 to 1 against disaster recovery for their fellow Americans. That is how they voted over there. But Speaker BOEHNER knew how much trouble he would be in with, among others, Governor Christie of New Jersey, so he called it up anyway. He violated this so-called Hastert rule and he brought it up for a vote, and it passed again in bipartisan fashion.

Today, tonight, tomorrow, the next day—any time he chooses—Speaker BOEHNER can turn the key and unlock the government tea party shutdown. He can do that. He has done it three times before. Of course, that got all his tea party folks all excited and they started making new threats and new challenges and new demands, so he is reluctant to go down that road again. But he has done it before, and it remains in his hands. I would submit it is the right thing to do for our country, and that he should put that first.

The first way they fouled up the continuing resolution was to try and stall the Affordable Care Act on it. Well, we voted that down over and over, and cooler heads may be beginning to prevail. But I would remind everybody there are two pretty distinct, I guess we will call them ObamaCares now, since that is the word that is being used—two ObamaCares out there. One, to use Majority Leader REID's phrase, is a punch line. It is the punch line "ObamaCare" that revs people up at rallies, that sends that rightwing e-mail chain into vibrations, but which is mostly a product of a fertile and overheated imagination.

The real ObamaCare, at least the real one we see in my home State of Rhode Island, is actually something we like a lot. Seniors are getting protection from the dreaded doughnut hole and are saving over \$1,000 each on prescription medications, on average. They see the Affordable Care Act as something that is having a real benefit in their lives right now.

Parents, such as myself, who have kids out of college and under 26—and I hear this from everybody across Rhode Island—are saying: Thank gosh the Affordable Care Act is there, because my daughter is out of college and she hasn't been able to find a job yet that has a health care benefit, so I can keep her on my policy and I don't have to worry if she gets sick the whole family could be bust. Having her on my policy

makes me feel so good. Thank you for that.

That is what I hear. That is a real and good thing for actual Rhode Islanders. It is not the imaginary ObamaCare. It is the real ObamaCare.

Families who have a child with a pre-existing condition—what do you do about that? You could spend down and give up all your resources, everything you have worked for and earned, so that your family can go on Medicaid—that is one way—or you could stay in the same job forever because the minute you try to move from your employer's health care plan to a new employer's health care plan, your child's preexisting condition doesn't get covered any longer. So you are trapped. Across this country, people are spared that agony by the Affordable Care Act.

We had Peter Orszag in the other day to talk to our caucus. He said that if you extend out the cost of Medicare to the future, it is already down \$1.2 trillion from the savings we see from reforms that are happening in red States, in blue States, in Massachusetts, where the Presiding Officer is from, in Utah, in Pennsylvania, in Wisconsin, in Minnesota, in California, in Rhode Island—all across the country. It is not political. It is about a better health care system, and we are already seeing the savings.

That is what they want to take away. That is what they want to stop. One thousand dollars out of the pockets of seniors and back to the pharmaceutical companies—that is what the result would be; parents having to lose the protection for their kids at 26; families trapped with a child with a preexisting condition never able to leave the company they work for; and the savings that we are already seeing beginning to evaporate. Why do you shut down the country and harm people in those ways? It makes no sense. The tea party shutdown has to stop.

I ordinarily come to the floor at this time to discuss the appalling way the Senate and the House are blissfully ignoring the evidence all around us of what carbon pollution is doing to our atmosphere and oceans. There is a clear connection between the problems we are in today that have caused this tea party government shutdown and our inability to face the facts about carbon pollution as a Congress. There are some similar characteristics between those two problems, and I would like to discuss them briefly.

One characteristic is an inability to face and address present or looming problems—real ones. In the case of the tea party shutdown, they have actually created a massive artificial problem—a government shutdown for our country—at the same time that the tea party members prevent us from getting together to take the Senate budget and House budget and bring them into conference and agreement in the ordinary process like adults. It is all in the service of the pretense I just discussed: that the Affordable Care Act isn't actu-

ally good for our country. It is a triple phony-problem whammy for our country. This inability to face and address real problems is the first characteristic.

The second characteristic is that inability is based on opposition that stands on false or fanciful arguments based more on propaganda than facts. In the case of climate, the fanciful argument—the falsehood—is that the jury is still out. The evidence is not only real, but it is overwhelming right now.

The third characteristic is that the opposition that gives rise to this inability to face and address real problems is fomented by small interest groups wishing to exercise undue influence without due regard for the harm they cause to their fellow Americans.

That is our DC trifecta these days. We can't deal with real problems. We have an atmosphere of phony arguments and propaganda that foul things up, and it is based on opposition that is driven by small but powerful special interests.

I hope and pray the American people will send a strong message to the tea party to knock off the tea party shutdown that is closing and fracturing our government. I hope the response of the American people is a wake-up call to them. As one faction of one party in one House of Congress in one branch of our separated powers of government, they don't get to have everything their way. That is not the way the Constitution was structured. And that is particularly true when the public doesn't agree with them—and the public doesn't agree with them. They just lost an election on this exact issue.

We are going to have other disagreements, and if we just roll through this one and then bang right up against the next hostage scenario—very likely on the debt limit, which, if we blow that and go into default, will be even more catastrophic than the accumulating economic harm of a government shutdown—if we keep going into one hostage scenario after another, then we won't have solved the real problem: We cannot work like responsible adults when a minority—a faction of one party in one House in one branch of government—is having the procedural equivalent of a tantrum.

And true as science and real as Mother Nature, we have the problem of carbon pollution bearing down upon us. Will the polluters prevent action on that? Will we fail to do our duty as representatives of the American people? Will we be unable to face and address this real problem because we are opposed by false and fanciful arguments, with the strings pulled by special interests, instead of us looking plainly at the problems and coming together for a reasonable solution?

This has been a different day than my usual "time to wake up" speech. It is time to wake up to the problems of carbon pollution and climate change. It is also time to wake up to the peculiar

way that special and narrow interests are able to tie this body in knots and do damage to the American public for their own benefit. That larger problem is something we are going to have to reconcile ourselves with. If we just look at this as one problem—the tea party shutdown—and we get through it, we will simply go on to another unless we have decided that our Constitution matters for something, that the structure of government the Founding Fathers put together gave us a procedure to work out our differences and that we should follow that constitutional procedure even when we have strong feelings about something. That is the legacy of the men and women who founded this country. It is the legacy for which men and women have fought and bled and died. It besmirches that legacy to have a tiny faction of one party in one House of one branch of government break the whole mechanism just because they want everything their own way.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. WARREN). The Senator from Ohio.

Mr. BROWN. Madam President, I think the Senator from Rhode Island had it exactly right calling it a tea party shutdown. It is unnecessary, it inflicts pain on far too many Rhode Islanders and people from Massachusetts and Ohioans. It is all so needless. It is so simple: Open the government.

I think Speaker BOEHNER needs to make a decision: Does he want to be Speaker of the far right wing of the Republican Party or does he want to be Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives? If he chooses to do the latter, it will mean putting what is called the continuing resolution to reopen the government on the floor in the House of Representatives down the hall, allowing all 430-something Members of the House to vote—Members of both parties, all duly elected in November, all sworn in on January 3 of this year—allow them to vote. If they vote, I am confident that Democrats and Republicans together will reach a strong majority, that legislation will then be sent to the White House, the President will sign it, and the government shutdown will end. It is irresponsible not to let the House of Representatives vote.

Yesterday or earlier today the President said: One faction of one party of one House of one branch of government shut down the government. This whole lurching from one crisis to another by design, by sort of a manufactured crisis that we have seen over and over, is something that simply doesn't work for the American people.

I come to the Senate floor from time to time and read letters from constituents. I won't read letters today because the Senator from Arkansas will be speaking in a moment, but I will tell a few quick stories.

A number of working Ohioans—from the small business owner in Lima, in western Ohio, waiting for a loan, to the farmer in Chillicothe looking for help

from the USDA, to Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, employees on the base and contractors off the base—are all affected by this.

Ninety-one World War II veterans who stepped off an Honor Flight in Washington, DC, on Tuesday to visit the World War II memorial—their memorial—are affected.

I have been to those Honor Flights when they visit. They visit Arlington and the World War II memorial, which is a fairly new memorial on the Mall. Many of those soldiers and sailors and air men and women who have come from my State have never been to Washington before. This is their first trip. They are often in their eighties.

Those 91 World War II veterans—many in wheelchairs, many with walkers—came anyway even though they heard the place was shut down. They weren't letting a government shutdown prevent them from paying their respects to their brothers and sisters who died during World War II or fought in that war and have died since. They persevered just as they had fighting in World War II.

These organizations give back to the men and women who gave so much to our country.

These 91 World War II veterans prevailed even though the memorial was shut down. They pretty much forced their way in, with help from a number of others.

But too many Ohioans will be hurt.

Sharon Purdy of Spencerville, OH, wrote to me, concerned about the status of this weekend's National Fallen Firefighters Memorial Service held each year in Emmitsburg, MD. Her husband Lee was killed in the line of duty in the year 2000 and was memorialized there 12 years ago. Sharon goes back every year to pay her respects. Two Ohio firefighters killed in the line of duty will be honored this year—Michael Burgan from the Sugarcreek Fire Department and Rocky Duncan from the Niles Township Fire Department. Thousands of firefighters and their families will be coming from across the country to pay their respects, but presumably the gates will be closed. That is how government is repaying them for their sacrifice because some people want to score political points instead of doing their job and are irresponsibly shutting down the government—the so-called tea party shutdown.

I received a letter today from Judith Cowan, the president of the Ohio Energy and Advanced Manufacturing Center. She is building a state-of-the-art manufacturing center in Lima, OH—investing in new electromagnetic forming technology. She has been partnering with the Economic Development Administration to build the center.

She received a notice today that her reimbursement check from EDA is on hold due to the shutdown. EDA is not allowed under the law to do that. Because they can't pay the bills, they must stop because of this irresponsible

tea party shutdown of the government. Her project is in midconstruction, supplies have been purchased, concrete has been poured, and workers' time has been set aside. She told my office she makes an effort to hire local contractors and use small businesses in her supply chain. She is concerned that these small businesses that live paycheck to paycheck depend on her. Think of the people who poured the concrete. Think of the small companies that did the ironwork. Think of the other companies that have sold to her for this EDA-financed project and you realize some of these small businesses are going to face very hard times, again because of this hard-headed, far-right tea party shutdown which was simply unnecessary.

Contrary to the political games the far right in the House, the radicals, are playing, this is not a game. These are real people facing a real and devastating impact. They do not deserve to be punished for the political ideology of a few.

Remember, one faction of one political party in one House of one branch of government has held hostage the whole rest of the government and these hundreds of thousands of Federal employees and the millions of people affected by them. This is not about whether we will or will not agree to go to conference on the budget. This is about whether Congress in this country can continue to govern.

Senate Democrats have compromised on funding levels. According to reports, the Senate-passed resolution comes at a level 18 percent below what the President proposed 5 years ago. It is 17 percent below what the Democratic Congress proposed 4 years ago. It is 10 percent below what Republicans proposed 3 years ago and 3 percent below the debt ceiling of 3 years ago. This is not about spending. This is not about fiscal issues. This is about attaching one party's—in this case the Republicans'—political platform—presumably out of the 2012 Republican Convention—to simple legislation to make the government work, to keep the government going.

It is a waiting game they are willing to play. The American people are not willing to play. For some it is OK to hurt 1,000 small businesses as the SBA loan program is furloughed. For some it is OK to put 50,000 Ohio Federal employees and hundreds of thousands more around the country out of work. For some it is OK to deny senior citizens, in Mansfield or in Ravenna or in Youngstown, a new Social Security benefit.

It is not OK with me. It is not OK with most of the Members of the Senate. It surely is not OK with the American people. It is time to stop these political games. It is time to put the American people first.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arkansas.

Mr. PRYOR. Madam President, I rise to say I have disappointment and frustration and that is what is causing me

to speak today, because this is the day I worked very hard to prevent. I think many in this Chamber, on both sides of the aisle but particularly on this side of the aisle, have worked very hard to prevent this day from happening. Our government has shut down. It hurts our economy just when we are turning the corner, and this is something I think the economists are talking about. When we talk to our colleagues, not just in this Chamber but around the country, when we talk to Governors and talk to State legislators and businesspeople, people we know from all around the country, they are so disappointed that it has gotten to this point.

I think most people express what I heard about 10 days ago when I was in Arkansas. I was at a big dinner to raise money for cancer research at the University of Arkansas for medical sciences. By the way, they raised about \$1 million that night. It was a great evening. They honored my parents, which was very nice. But nonetheless, when we were there, I bet I had a dozen people come up to me and say: What is wrong with the House? Have these people lost their minds? What are they doing over there?

This is back about 10 days ago when they voted the way they voted recently on the farm bill. That was on a Thursday. On Friday, they took that step that was leading to where we are today on shutting down the Government.

What I tell the folks in Arkansas is: Look, hyperpartisanship has taken over here. This is one of those situations where if we look at the track record of the Senate—I know it is not true in every single case—but if we look at the track record of the Senate in our Chamber, we try to work in a bipartisan way. Because of the nature of the rules, because of the size of the body, because of the traditions, quite honestly because of the Constitution, because of our DNA, we tend to work together in this body. That has been a key to the Senate for years and years.

What it has led to in this particular case is we have passed four what I think of as very responsible measures to keep the government open. These are four responsible measures we voted on fair and square. They came to the floor. The votes were not all 100 to nothing, but nonetheless people are working together to try to get this resolved.

You go down the hall to the House and what you see down there is “my way or the highway” politics. My fellow Americans know it is true that these are dead-end politics. It is leading us nowhere.

We have to think of where we have been in the last few years. Think about how bad things were in the great recession. Think about the progress we have made since then. Look at our housing market. It is so much better today than it was 5 years ago. Consumer confidence is back, headed in the right direction. It is good. It is getting strong-

er all the time. Look at sales of trucks and cars in this country. They have reached their fastest pace since November of 2007, before the crash.

In the private sector, month after month they continue to add jobs all around the country. Those are good results. Why in the world does the House want to put this all in jeopardy? I have been concerned because in the last few days I have had reporters who kind of stalk us out in the hallways on our way in and out of the Capitol or when we are voting—I have had more than one stop me and say: You realize when we go down and cover the House, they talk about red State Democrats. They talk about your race in Arkansas.

It is going to be a very sad day in this country when we learn this is all about politics. I sincerely hope it is not all about politics. I hope we do not have people down in the other Chamber who have elevated politics above what is best, what is right for our country.

When I hear those questions from reporters, there certainly are people down there who are talking a lot about politics when this Nation is in crisis. I think we should all be concerned about that. I think we should make sure that is not the case. If they have a legitimate philosophical issue, that is one thing. But if this is all about politics, if these irresponsible set of votes to shut down the Government is all about politics, then shame on them. Because when we look at the impact this is going to have—the Social Security Administration will be forced to reduce staff. That causes delays for our seniors as they file for benefits and as they apply for replacement Social Security cards. The progress we have made with the VA—I have been very involved in trying to cut back the VA backlog of claims. That progress we have made there is going to stop. It is going to force our vets to wait even longer to get the benefits they have earned.

When we look at small businesses with the shutting down of the Small Business Administration, we are going to have hundreds and hundreds of small businesses that are going to lose their access to capital just in the next few days. The national parks, wildlife refuges, recreational areas—it is a terrible thing for American families who want to take their children out and want to take their families out to explore and experience the great outdoors here in America, some of the raw beauty America has to offer. But it is also bad for business. We have a lot of businesses in my State, we have a lot of businesses around the country that are around these areas. They thrive on things such as canoe rentals, camping equipment, et cetera. It could be bicycling, could be hiking boots, whatever it is. These businesses depend on that type of activity. They depend on those facilities being open, and they depend on Americans having the ability to go out and see and experience the great things in this country.

I am also chairman of the subcommittee on agriculture appropriations. I know firsthand the devastating impact this shutdown will have on our agricultural industry. It is going to have negative ripple effects all around the Nation's economy.

One thing I have learned the hard way in Washington in the last 10 or 11 years, there are a lot of people inside the beltway who do not understand agriculture. They do not get excited about agriculture. They do not care about agriculture. Sometimes they take it for granted. But the truth is agriculture is one of the core strengths in the U.S. economy. It is something we do better than everyone else in the world. Everyone else in the world wants to be like us. It is something we can be proud of. It adds a lot to the Nation's economy. It is also great for our trade.

If we take my one State of Arkansas, it is our largest industry. It supports one in six jobs in my State. It also creates about \$17 billion of economic activity, and overall, when we look at the State's economy, it is about 25 percent of the economy of Arkansas. That is going to be true—maybe those numbers are not exactly the same—that kind of ratio, those kinds of numbers are going to be true in every State in the Union.

I know Senator STABENOW is chair of the Senate Agriculture Committee. She talks about how everybody thinks about Michigan as heavy industry, the auto industry, et cetera, and all that is true. But the second largest industry in Michigan is agriculture.

It is just like if we go to a State such as Massachusetts. The mix of agricultural products in a State such as Massachusetts is going to be very different than what we have in the State of Arkansas, but it allows Massachusetts to utilize its natural advantages, natural resources. Things such as specialty crops are going to be very important up there. We have some of that in our State. But every State has a different mix and it is important that every State be very strong in agriculture.

One of the newer areas in agriculture, which is good, is organic farming and the like. Certainly, that is part of the future. That is something in the Senate farm bill. It is something we want to see get done. We don't want to see that brought to a halt or hampered in any way.

We don't want to see our food supply and fiber supply jeopardized by rank politics down the hall in the House of Representatives. The House has already created turmoil in this vital industry by shutting down the government. But to complicate matters, they have also taken another very irresponsible set of actions in the last few weeks; that is, they have allowed, because of their own problems down the hall, they have allowed the 2008 farm bill to expire.

Last night at midnight we went from the 2008 farm bill to the 1949 law. The United States of America is currently

under the 1949 agriculture law. The problem is there is no solution in sight.

God bless DEBBIE STABENOW. Senator STABENOW has been an amazing champion for agriculture. I mentioned her—agriculture is the second largest industry in Michigan—but she has worked so hard in the last couple of years to try to get this Chamber to do right on agriculture, and it has.

Last year we passed a farm bill. It went down the hall and died. This year we passed a farm bill. It went down the hall and they blew it up.

We see us working in a bipartisan way. By the way, that farm bill in the Senate got something like 66 votes, a good, solid bipartisan vote. But the House Members, they continue to wreak havoc with this economic powerhouse.

Right now, think about agriculture, one of the core strengths, one of the pillars of the U.S. economy. We see it facing a double whammy. They got the slowdown. Now they have the expiration of the 2008 farm bill.

What does that mean? If you are a farmer, you will know what this means. The Farm Service Agency, Rural Development, the Natural Resources Conservation Service—the county offices will all be closing. We had farmers today call us and say: Can I get this payment? I can make this happen? Can I apply for something? A lot of times the answer to that is going to be, no, because those offices will be closed. When they need help, there is not going to be anyone there to help them. When they go there, basically they are going to knock on the door and it is going to be locked up. They are going to be closed for business. This means that new USDA loans and grants are being stopped. This means the cutting-edge agricultural research that America is famous for is going to stop.

It also means that when it comes to food inspection and those workers, that is going to be in jeopardy as well. That is something we fought very hard on. I was allied with many of my Republican colleagues on that matter.

The worst part about this—and maybe the saddest part about this—is that it was all so preventable. We can still prevent it from happening. We can do something today to make this go away. But, nonetheless, here again the House refuses to compromise. It is this “my way or the highway” attitude, as I said before, that is leading us to a dead end.

About 2 weeks ago, several of us were fortunate enough to listen to TOM CARPER come and speak to us about some things that were on his mind. It was a bipartisan group. There were 15 or 20 of us there. Tom singled out one of our great colleagues, MIKE ENZI. MIKE ENZI has been a stalwart conservative, red rock Republican, but he is someone we all know, trust, and respect.

He talked about when MIKE ENZI and Ted Kennedy were paired up as chair and ranking member of the Senate

HELP Committee. That is a very unlikely pair. They don't get any different than that in philosophy, personality, background or regions of the country. Nonetheless, those two Senators adopted what they called the 80–20 rule. They knew they didn't agree on everything so they said: Let's find 80 percent of the things we can agree on. Let's work on those and let's get it done and that is what they did. It is a great example of bipartisanship.

Senator Kennedy, as liberal as he was—he was a great liberal lion, and everybody knows that. He was very staunch in his views and very serious about how he took those views, but he was also very much willing to reach across the aisle. That 80–20 rule is what is missing down the hallway. We still have it in the Senate, to some extent but not as much as we used to. We need to make sure we reestablish this 80–20 rule and find areas of common ground where we agree so we can work with each other in every single situation we possibly can. But down the hall, that is gone, and that is the problem right now in Washington.

There are a lot of people in the Congress—some in the Senate as well but in the House and Senate generally—who say: I want 100 percent or nothing. If I can't have 100 percent, you get nothing. They will do everything they can to stop it, and that is exactly what happened. That is why we have this crisis today. It is completely manufactured by the U.S. House of Representatives.

I feel that I am elected by my people to make the hard decisions, do what is best for the country, do what is right, and use my best judgment. All of these are judgment calls, and they are tough calls, but that is what governing is about. It is about making those tough calls and showing some leadership.

So tonight I urge our colleagues in the House, all 435 of them, to stop the hyperpartisanship, especially those on the Republican side of the aisle who just can't seem to say yes when it comes to a bipartisan solution. I urge them to stop the hyperpartisanship and work with the Senate to reopen our government.

I will be working very hard to find a responsible agreement, and I sincerely hope we have a sufficient number in the House who will join me, and let's get this done.

With that I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

Mr. HARKIN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. HARKIN. As chair of the HELP Committee—that great committee upon which the Presiding Officer also

sits and a valuable member of that committee—I was just informed by our staff that as of this last hour, over 2.8 million people have gone on healthcare.gov to get information and sign up for the Affordable Care Act.

In fact, there were so many people online that at different places in the country, the Web site froze. Then I heard some of my Republican friends were saying: See, we told you it wasn't ready. The Web site is not working right. If very few people had signed up, they would have said: See, we told you no one is going to sign up for it. They are trying to have it both ways.

There were 2.8 million Americans on the first day logged on to healthcare.gov to get this information, and, again, to sign up. By tomorrow we will have some data and some statistics on how many people who not only inquired but have actually signed up on the Web sites. We will have some more information on that tomorrow. Obviously, the interest is there, and we knew it would be.

Leader REID told a story today about how years ago he went out and visited Google in California. At the time they were telling him that when they first started Google, they didn't realize how many people would be using it, and they kept crashing and freezing. So they had glitches of their own. There are some glitches in this system because a lot of people are coming on and wanting the information and wanting to sign up. That is the good news, and it is what we always knew.

We knew that when we passed the Affordable Care Act, if we approached it in a diligent, forthright way but cautiously and in an orderly manner, it would work, and that is why it has taken us almost 3 years to get to this point because we wanted to do it right. We wanted to do it in a way that would work.

I think today is a remarkable day in the history of our country in that we are now going to have affordable health care insurance for every American that cannot be taken away if you get sick. They can't deny it to a family because somebody had a preexisting condition. Everyone will have health care insurance that will be affordable and can't be taken away, and we will have a whole new suite of preventive care measures and wellness programs to keep people healthy and to prevent illness in the first place.

We have turned the corner on bringing health care to every American regardless of their health status, regardless of their economic status, regardless of whether they have a job or don't have a job, no matter how old, no matter how young, and no matter the circumstances. Everyone will be able to be covered by health care insurance.

I guess I might also say it is another red letter day because of the closedown of the government. We have the House of Representatives that, again, will not even put the bill on the floor of the House for a vote that will keep the government running. Think about that.

They will not even put it on the floor for a vote because they know if they put it on the floor, they will get enough Republicans and Democrats to vote for it, and it will pass.

So the tea party extremists in the House—instead of putting it on the floor and passing it tonight so the government could be back in business tomorrow—are trying to make a little deal. First it was to defund and delay ObamaCare. Now they have something they are doing on the House floor where they are going to fund some little TV programs. It is nonsense. This is not worthy of a great country.

I had a nice conversation with Secretary of State Kerry this morning—not necessarily just about this, but, of course, we talked about the government shutdown. I asked him: Secretary, you are close to this. How is this playing in other countries? Secretary Kerry said: It is painful for us in the State Department—representing the government of the United States in a nonpartisan way—to have other countries look at us, scratch their heads, and wonder why we are doing things like this. He was just pained, not for himself but for all of his wonderful diplomats and ambassadors all around the world who represent our country and what they must have to go through to have other countries see what we are doing and question our judgment.

That is what the tea party people are doing. They are driving this country down. What they are doing is very dangerous. It is ideologically driven obstructionism, and it has taken a dangerous turn.

Again, despite the efforts to pass a continuing resolution to fund the government, the House Republicans have shut down the government because we will not submit to defunding or delaying ObamaCare, or the Affordable Care Act, whichever you call it.

It seems as though we see this crisis differently. I was reading a newspaper report that one Member of the House Republican caucus said with a big smile: We are very excited. It is exactly what we wanted, and we got it. This is exactly what they wanted, a government shutdown and they got it? We are excited, she said.

The article also notes the reaction of another representative who reportedly said: It is wonderful. We are 100 percent united. Again, that was from another tea party Republican.

What are they excited about? Are they excited about the hundreds of thousands of Federal workers who are on furlough today? Are they excited about the closed monuments and the national parks? Are they excited about the delayed veterans' benefits, Social Security, loss of economic activity and jobs?

After more than three decades in Washington, it is difficult to shock me, but the sheer cynicism and fundamental lack of decency we are witnessing right now is nothing short of breathtaking.

As I understand it, this is just the first step. The tea party Republicans continue to threaten that if the Senate and President Obama don't submit to their demands, they will create another economic crisis by causing our country to default on the national debt in the middle of the month.

Who pays the price for this recklessness?

Mr. DURBIN. Will the Senator yield for a question?

Mr. HARKIN. I would be delighted to yield to my friend from Illinois.

Mr. DURBIN. The Senator from Iowa has the special responsibility of the authorizing and appropriating committee that deals with health and education and the National Institutes of Health, and so he understands medical research better than most.

I am sure he is aware now that the junior Senator from Texas, Mr. CRUZ, is making a list of those agencies of government which he and the tea party Republicans believe should be reopened. The first cut on that list includes the Veterans' Administration, but it doesn't include the 564,000 employees who are also veterans, one-fourth of whom are disabled veterans. He has included the National Park Service because of the embarrassment of international visitors coming to the Statue of Liberty and finding it closed, and he included the District of Columbia.

I note he has not included the National Institutes of Health.

I wonder if the Senator from Iowa has read the Wall Street article today. It says, as follows:

At the National Institutes of Health nearly three-quarters of the staff were furloughed. One result: director Francis Collins said about 200 patients who otherwise would be admitted to the NIH Clinical Center into clinical trials each week will be turned away. This includes about 30 children, most of them cancer patients, he said.

My question is this: Would the Senator from Iowa join me in writing a letter to the junior Senator from Texas and the tea party Republicans begging them to include the National Institutes of Health on their list of agencies that they may consider reopening?

Mr. HARKIN. I say to my friend from Illinois, I would be delighted to sign on to that letter because I am acutely aware of what is happening at NIH, but I might also tell my friend from Illinois that I would also like to include the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Mr. DURBIN. We shouldn't push our luck with the junior Senator from Texas.

Mr. HARKIN. But I must say to my friend that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is out there keeping diseases from spreading, containing them where they break out, putting in prevention measures all over this country. They too are furloughing people. Just think what would happen if, God forbid, some virulent bacteria or virus were to break out and they

have—as my colleague knows, the CDC is very good at containment. They know how to handle these situations. What if they don't have the people to do that?

Mr. DURBIN. I would say to the Senator from Iowa, we better not push our luck asking for both the National Institutes of Health and the Centers for Disease Control from Senator CRUZ.

In all honesty, we are not sending any letters. This is reckless and irresponsible, to threaten the lives of people going for clinical trials at the National Institutes of Health. To quote from a distant past in this Chamber, in this Congress, "Have they no shame?" Have they no shame, to shut down the Government of the United States of America, endangering the lives of individuals over a political temper tantrum?

Mr. HARKIN. I say to my friend, it is shameful. It is not befitting a great nation. Maybe they would like us to be a Third World country.

I see this and I don't understand. The Senator from Illinois is right: Where is their shame? But where is their sense of responsibility? Where is their sense of being responsible to the people of this country, to have a government that works to protect them, to keep them healthy, that does the medical research that the Senator spoke about? I see that, and I don't understand why they don't grasp the kind of damage they are doing to our country. I don't understand it.

Mr. DURBIN. I will respond to the Senator from Iowa and then yield the floor back to him, and I see the Senator from New Hampshire waiting.

Our last best hope in this debate is that moderate Republicans will step up and say, Enough. This is not what the Republican Party is about. This is not what America should be about.

We need to be solving these problems on a bipartisan basis. If enough moderate Republicans would come to that empty side of the floor, which we have been witnessing all day today, and speak out, we could bring an end to this national embarrassment.

I thank the Senator from Iowa.

Mr. HARKIN. Madam President, I thank the Senator for his input and his questions. I think the Senator has highlighted the kind of situation that begs credulity. People around this country must wonder, Have we taken all leave of our senses here?

People say we should sit down and negotiate. We are always willing to negotiate. We are always willing to talk about issues. But when the tea party Republicans in the House say, No, we won't even keep the government open unless we defund ObamaCare, which is the law of the land, that is trying to nullify a law by holding a gun at our heads and saying we are going to shut down the government unless we get rid of a law—not a bill, not a proposal before us, but the law of the land upheld by the Supreme Court, this is not the way to govern. It is the way to take

hostages, maybe. It is the way to commit blackmail, but it is not the way to run a government.

So I hope the moderate Republicans—and believe me, there are a lot of good moderate Republicans. On my own committee, I deal with good people who work together to get bills passed and to get them out of our committee. We just need them to say to the tea party: You are wrong. This is not good for us, it is not good for the country, and it is not good for the Republican Party, either.

I will have more to say about this later as well as tomorrow when I will bring some more figures to the floor on how many more people are excited about the Affordable Care Act and are going to healthcare.gov.

If I might, I wish to take one extra minute here to say that I was down at the World War II Memorial this morning to greet some Iowans who were coming in on an Honor Flight and I saw the barricade up there. I talked to one of the park officers and I said, This doesn't make sense. It doesn't make sense because it is open. I have come down here at midnight and walked around. It is out in the open. I could understand it if it were a building where you had to go through a device and security. I could understand that because the government is shut down. Then some buses came from Mississippi. I had to leave before the Iowans could arrive. They went behind the barrier. They went in and everybody was fine. I heard this afternoon that the Park Police came down and now we are moving people out again and putting up the barricades.

Why are there barricades on the Jefferson Memorial, the Lincoln Memorial, the World War II Memorial, the Vietnam Memorial, or any of those where people walk around? It doesn't make sense to put up barricades around these outdoor memorials.

While this whole shutdown of government is nonsense, I don't think we ought to respond to nonsense with more nonsense. So I call upon the Park Service and the Department of the Interior, on those instances where it is open 24 hours a day, such as the World War II Memorial, the Korean War Memorial, or the Lincoln and Jefferson Monuments, why put up the barricades? People are there, they go there 24 hours a day. This doesn't make sense. I hope by tomorrow, whoever gave the orders to put those barricades up will have those orders superseded by someone higher up and get those barricades down. As I said, I can understand if it is a building where we have to have security, where we have to have guards and machines and equipment. I understand, with a government shutdown, that is not accessible. But for something that is open, as those monuments are, where people wander in and out 24 hours a day, it makes no sense to put up barricades. I call upon the Park Service to get rid of those barricades.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Hampshire.

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Madam President, I came to join my colleagues on the floor this afternoon to talk about and to call on our colleagues in the House—those Republicans who have been taking this irresponsible action—to stop what they are doing and help us resolve this government shutdown.

We are involved in a completely manufactured shutdown of our government. This is something that didn't have to happen. Right now, there is a majority in the House ready to pass a bill to keep our government open, to start it back up again, to end this crisis. But here we are. We are in the midst of the first government shutdown in 17 years because a small minority of the minority party in the other House is holding this government hostage so it can pursue its agenda of trying to end the Affordable Care Act. I don't know why they don't want to make sure that people in this country can get access to health care. I am not going to talk about that this evening.

This is irresponsible. We are already seeing the effects of this crisis in New Hampshire and across the country. We have thousands of Federal employees in my State of New Hampshire who could face furloughs. That includes workers at our Portsmouth Naval Shipyard. Those folks are from Maine and New Hampshire, but they are looking at furloughs.

We have already heard from over 300 civilian technicians for the National Guard in New Hampshire who were notified they are going to be furloughed. I have started hearing from constituents whose lives are affected by our inability here in Washington to address keeping this government open.

I heard from one of my constituents in Portsmouth, a man named Robert Cody. He writes:

Dear Senator Shaheen,

Please do not allow a government shutdown to occur. The consequences to individuals and the economy will be catastrophic.

He goes on to say:

To put this on personal terms, my daughter just finished graduate school and began work as a consulting doctor at a Veteran's Administration hospital providing care to wounded veterans. If a shutdown occurs, she will lose her job and be faced with crushing student loan debt and no way to pay back the loans or her living expenses. The veterans who will be deprived of her care will be victims of the shutdown as well. Her situation is just one of many.

Robert, you are certainly right about that.

Hard-working individuals must not be forced to suffer to make a political point.

He goes on to say:

Please do the right thing! The consequences to the economy and unemployment will be far-reaching, and you will be blamed if you contribute to this looming disaster.

I say to Robert: I couldn't agree more with what you have said. I think we need to work together. We need to try

to avoid any further harm to people who depend not only on the jobs—the people who are going to be laid off—but also those people who benefit from the services the Federal Government provides.

Salaries for our Federal workers aren't just important for them and their families; they are also critical to their local economies. When hard-working New Hampshire citizens aren't able to get their paychecks, they stop making their mortgage payments, they stop paying their utility bills, they stop shopping at local stores. That is what we are going to see if this shutdown continues. It will inflict serious consequences on the economy.

New Small Business Administration loans are not being originated. SBA loans are critical for job creation in New Hampshire. Our small businesses represent 96 percent of all employers. In 2012, SBA helped 630 small businesses in New Hampshire get access to over \$130 million in loans. Now, because of this shutdown, businesses are not going to have access to those loans.

The Federal Housing Administration loans are slowing. Our housing market has really just begun to recover, but it is still fragile. Now, because of the shutdown, we are going to be holding up home sales because much of the FHA staff is furloughed.

Of course, this is terrible timing for the tourism industry in New Hampshire. We are just beginning our fall foliage season. It is a spectacular time to travel around New Hampshire. We have tourists who come from all over the world, who spend money in our local restaurants, who stay at our hotels, and visit our attractions. Many of our small businesses rely on this time of the year to provide the revenue they need to continue operating all year long. We know the tourists who come from overseas stay longer and spend more money. But if the shutdown in government means we are going to be turning away many of those customers, applications for visas are going to come to a halt. According to the Congressional Research Service, during the 1995–1996 shutdown, approximately 20,000 to 30,000 applications for foreigners for visas went unprocessed each day, and U.S. tourism industries—the airlines, the hotels, the restaurants, all of the affiliated businesses that depend on tourism—lost millions of dollars.

We also have a visa center in New Hampshire that works on those visas. They are shut down as part of this government closure. We have a lot of small businesses in New Hampshire and across the country that rely on Federal contracts as they grow and create new jobs.

I talked to one of those small business owners today—a man named Lou Altman with Globafone. I have known Lou for a long time. He has worked in New Hampshire and around the world. He called to express his deep frustration about our failing to pass a continuing resolution to keep this government open.

Globafone's satellite technologies help Federal agencies meet critical needs, in addition to providing technology for many developing countries. But with the shutdown, everything is up in the air for Globafone. They are not certain what this means for their government contracts. As a result their cash flows are uncertain. Since their cash flows are uncertain, their line of credit with the bank is uncertain. I do not blame Lou for being frustrated for wanting to know why we cannot work together to get this done.

I would say to my colleagues in the House, you cannot take this government hostage and expect that we are going to be able to negotiate. This government shutdown is bad for our economy, bad for middle-class families, bad for our country. Unfortunately, what we have seen this week is that some have decided they want to inflict another manufactured crisis as a tactic to prevent health care reform from going into effect.

The people that I talk to in New Hampshire do not think this is a good approach. They know that a government shutdown is serious, that it has consequences for our economy and jobs. Considering that impact, it is no surprise that economists have forecast that our failure to deal with this crisis will have a significant impact on our economy.

Even a 3- or 4-day shutdown could slow growth by 0.2 percent, according to economist Mark Zandi, and an extended shutdown could reduce growth by 1.4 percent. So holding the economy and critical services hostage to score political points is reckless and it is irresponsible. With the economy showing signs of improvement, this is the last thing we should be doing.

It does not have to be this way. I was a Governor for 3 terms. In two of those terms the other party controlled both chambers of our legislature. But we were always able to enact a budget before the fiscal year ended. We had a lot of differences along the way. But both sides understood that in order to reach an agreement, in order to pass a budget, in order to keep government operating, we had to compromise. It would have been impossible to imagine the New Hampshire legislature not getting a budget to my desk because they wanted to play political games or that they would have sent me a budget that they knew I was going to veto.

This Congress can certainly do better. We must do better. My colleagues have pointed out that the Senate in taking up the bill to keep the government funded, the continuing resolution, agreed to accept the dollar amount that the House wanted us to pass. So we compromised on this continuing resolution. What we saw for our willingness to do that was the House decided they were going to put all kinds of amendments on this bill to keep it from getting passed.

I certainly hope that we can pass this bill, that the House will take it up. All

the Speaker needs to do is take up the clean bill that the Senate sent them because they have the votes to pass it. If he is so sure that the votes are not there, then let people vote on it and see what happens.

But we know that is not the case. We know that the votes are there to pass this bill. Because it is being held hostage to a small minority in the Republican caucus, this government is shut down and tens of thousands of people across the country are experiencing difficulties as a result. I certainly hope that we are going to see some action soon. I am going to continue to work for that. I am sure all of us in the Senate will try to see that something gets done so we can reopen this government.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. SANDERS. Madam President, let me concur with much of what my colleague Senator SHAHEEN has just said. But let me begin by doing something we do not do enough and that is to say thank you to the 2 million civilians and 1.4 million men and women in the military in all of our 50 States, including some 5,000 in my own State of Vermont. So we have 2 million civilians who are working for the Federal Government and 1.4 million men and women in the military. We owe them a deep debt of gratitude. The work that they do is enormously important for our country.

They work to make sure that our drinking water and the air that we breathe is safe. It is not an accident that in many parts of this country, the air that people are breathing, that our kids are breathing, is a lot cleaner than it used to be. It took a lot of work to make that happen. We thank them for that.

We have Customs people patrolling our borders. We thank them for their work. We have Federal workers to protect the health and safety of working people all over the country. We have Federal workers who are working to educate kids with special needs. We have Federal employees who provide food to low-income pregnant women, infants, children, and senior citizens. We have Federal employees who are working in VA hospitals, and we have nurses and many other staff doing a great job for our veterans.

We have Federal employees who make sure that children receive needed care and services so that their parents can go to work. They repair our roads, bridges, dams, culverts, and sewers. They sweep the floors. They clean our bathrooms and make sure the places we work in are not infested.

Americans who work for the Federal Government are part of the backbone of this country. I personally thank them for what they do. But it is no secret that in recent years there has been a huge assault against the Federal workforce. For the past 3 years, the pay of Federal workers has been frozen at a time when the costs that they are

incurring in terms of gasoline, heating oil, prescription drugs, and of everything else have been going up. But their pay has been level.

As a thank you for all of the work that Federal employees do here in Washington and Vermont, in Massachusetts and all over this country, our thank you to them has been to shut down the government and to tell some 800,000 Federal employees—these are single moms trying to raise kids, these are proud people, civilians in the military, people in our National Guard; these are people who are doing important work, who have families to raise, and who are dedicated to their jobs—we are saying: Sorry, you have to go home. They are going home, and they are not even sure whether they are going to be paid or when they are going to be paid.

So you are looking at tens of thousands of lives that are being radically disrupted because of this shutdown. I can tell you that in Vermont, we are very proud of the Vermont National Guard. The Vermont National Guard men and women served very heavily and bravely in Iraq and Afghanistan.

They helped us when we had the terrible Irene floods a few years ago. The thank you that the Vermont National Guard is getting today—this is true all over the country—is that in Vermont some 450 workers at the Vermont National Guard are going to be furloughed. I know many of these people. They are good people. They are hard-working people. They do not deserve this type of behavior from the Federal Government.

This affects people from all over the State, people who are trying to get homes, people who are trying to start businesses. That is not something that should be happening.

Let me just very briefly explain the dynamic of what is going on right here. It is not complicated. The Republicans in the House are dominated by a relatively small group of rightwing extremists.

What the Speaker there has said is that instead of bringing to the floor the bill that we passed here in the Senate, what is called a clean CR that will continue funding the government, instead of putting that bill on the floor of the House and allowing the entire 435 Members of the House to vote on that bill, what he has done is said to the House Republicans: OK, what do you want? The extreme rightwing has dominated that. What they have said is: We want to defund ObamaCare. That is the only legislation that you, Mr. Speaker, can bring to the floor of the House.

This is a moment of enormous importance for the Speaker of the House. He has to determine whether he is the Speaker of the Republican Party or the Speaker of the House of Representatives, whether he is going to be dominated by a minority of one party in one part of the government or whether he will allow the entire House to vote.

What many of observers have made clear is, if he puts that bill on the floor, it will pass and the government will reopen. I hope that he will do that. My political view, my progressive political views are pretty well known. My views on this issue are well known in Vermont and maybe elsewhere in this country. But what I want to do is very briefly to express what some Republicans are saying, people who are not rightwing extremists, who, in fact, have very strong disagreements with the Affordable Care Act but who understand that they cannot hold the American people hostage and they cannot blackmail the government in order to get their way.

So this is not BERNIE SANDERS talking. These are conservative Republicans, but people who are not rightwing extremists. Let me quote some of my colleagues. These are the public statements they have made. SAXBY CHAMBLISS, a Republican Senator from Georgia, this is what he says:

I'd love to [defund ObamaCare] too. But shutting down the government and playing into the hands of the president politically is not the right thing to do. Plus, it's going to do great harm to the American people if we pursue that course. We've been there. It didn't work.

Senator DAN COATS, Republican from Indiana:

Here's the hard truth: President Obama will not overturn his signature legislation so long as he is president and the Democrats have control of the Senate. Along with these political realities, refusing to pass legislation to keep the government funded will not stop ObamaCare from going into effect.

Senator TOM COBURN, Republican from Oklahoma:

It's not an achievable strategy. It's creating the false impression that you can do something when you can't. And it's dishonest.

Republican Senator BOB CORKER from Tennessee. The Washington Post reports that CORKER compared shutting down the government to the way buffalo were slaughtered in the Old West. "I know when you get led into a box canyon what that means . . . Box canyon, here we come."

Representative PETER KING, Republican from New York.

We should not be closing down the government under any circumstances. That doesn't work, it's wrong, and you know, ObamaCare passed. We have to try to defund it, we have to try to find ways to repeal it. But the fact is, we shouldn't be using it as a threat to shut down the government.

Republican Senator ORRIN HATCH from Utah.

My personal belief is the only way to get rid of ObamaCare is to be intelligent and smart about it and gradually just work on it, work it through . . . to expect the government to shut down is not the way to do it.

MARK KIRK, Republican Senator from Illinois:

I am one of those who says, let's not shut down the government just because you don't get everything you want.

Senator JOHN MCCAIN, former Republican candidate for President of the United States:

In the United States Senate, we will not repeal, or defund, ObamaCare. We will not. And to think we can is not rational.

Senator ROB PORTMAN, Republican of Ohio:

I do think we need to deal with the underlying problem of overspending and we have to deal with the problem of Obamacare, but those ought to be handled outside of the context of a government shutdown.

Senator JIM RISCH, Republican of Idaho:

There isn't anybody that thinks that ObamaCare is going to get defunded. It cannot happen . . . We were elected to govern—you don't govern by shutting down the government.

I can go on and on.

There are many Republicans in the Senate and Republicans in the House who do not like ObamaCare. They understand that we don't shut down the government only to make a point. We don't throw 800,000 workers who work for the Federal Government, whose lives depend on a paycheck, out on the street in order to make a point.

I think JIM RISCH—Republican Senator from Idaho—had it right. I will repeat what he said:

There isn't anybody that thinks that ObamaCare is going to get defunded. It cannot happen . . . We were elected to govern—you don't govern by shutting down the government.

Senator RISCH is exactly correct.

Where we are right now is that there are many Republicans in the Senate, there are Republicans in the House, and there are millions of Republicans all over the country who say they have disagreements with ObamaCare, but it was passed by the Congress almost 4 years ago and signed by the President. When it was challenged by the Supreme Court, it was upheld as being constitutional. We had a Presidential election where the Affordable Care Act was one of the major issues being debated. President Obama won by 5 million votes. We had Senate races, and Republicans lost two seats in the Senate. They lost seats in the House.

There are sensible Republicans all over the country saying: Look, there are ways to deal with this issue, but don't shut down the government. Don't punish 800,000 workers. Do not deny benefits and services to tens of millions of Americans.

I would like to go to another area and suggest—although I think the Presiding Officer well understands this—that what we are seeing today in terms of the attack on ObamaCare is not only some isolated act on the part of rightwing Republicans. I think many Americans are not aware. People may like ObamaCare or may not like ObamaCare. As we well know, today was the first day the exchange was open. Guess what happened. Millions of people went to the Web site. Guess what. When we have 48 million Americans who have no health insurance and millions more who are in need with high deductibles and copayments and they are given the opportunity to buy insurance, shock of all shocks, many of

them are now going to the Web site. Our Republican friends are saying: No, no, we don't want to see that.

My point—and I hope everybody understands this—is that this attack on ObamaCare is only one small part of a rightwing extremist ideology which is incredibly reactionary and which really intends not only to repeal ObamaCare but to repeal virtually every major piece of legislation passed in this country in the last 80 years that protects the interests of the elderly, the children, the sick, the poor, women, the environment, and people who are vulnerable. That is what their agenda is.

I will give a few examples. The Environmental Protection Agency works hard to make sure the air we breathe is clean. There are many rightwing Republicans who don't want only to cut funding for the EPA, they want to abolish the EPA.

We have a major crisis in this country in terms of millions of American workers being forced to work for very low wages. People are working for 8 bucks an hour, 9 bucks an hour. They can't raise a family working for these very low wages. Many of us believe it is important that we raise the minimum wage. Do people know what the rightwing agenda is, the agenda funded by a family like the Koch brothers, a family worth \$70 billion that is pouring hundreds of millions of dollars into these rightwing extremist groups? Do you know what they say about the minimum wage? They say: Let's abolish the minimum wage.

People think I am kidding. The view now of the majority of the Members, the Republican Members in the Senate and the House, is not only not raising the minimum wage, it is to abolish the concept of the minimum wage. What that means is that if you are living in a high-unemployment area and the wages that are being offered to you by an employer are 3 bucks an hour or 4 bucks an hour, those are the wages you will have to accept because there will be no Federal floor. The Federal floor is \$7.25, and that is much too low. Get rid of that, and we will have people working for \$3 and \$4 an hour.

One of the most significant pieces of Federal legislation ever passed was passed in 1935—Social Security. Today we have over 50 million Americans who are benefiting from Social Security. If you go to the Texas Republican Party platform—their recent platform, and they are one of the most powerful Republican parties in the country—they are pretty up front about what they believe. They want to end Social Security. They want to privatize it. That is their goal.

The Veterans' Administration—and I speak today as chairman of the Veterans' Committee—today we have quite good VA health care through 152 medical centers run by the VA, 900 community-based outreach clinics, many vet centers. VA does, most veterans consider, a pretty good job in providing

health care. Do you know what some Republicans want to do? They want to privatize the Veterans' Administration. Check it out. This is the Texas Republican Party platform, which speaks for Republicans all over this country.

It is not only the VA and it is not only Social Security, it is many other programs. We recently saw our friends in the House cut food stamps by some \$4 billion this year. That is what they believe. Meanwhile, we have more people living in poverty today than at any time in the history of the United States. Many want to make devastating cuts in Medicaid, food stamps, and many other programs that people in this country are living on.

I will conclude by saying that we could end this crisis in a very few minutes. All that needs to happen is the Speaker of the House has to bring up the clean bill we passed here in the Senate and give all of his Members a chance to vote on it. If he does that, this crisis will be over.

It is morally wrong and it is extremely dangerous from a precedent perspective to allow this government and our President to be blackmailed or for the American people to be held hostage. If we were to succumb to that blackmail today, I can absolutely guarantee that in 2 weeks, when the United States is going to need to pay its debts, and we don't, for the first time in the history of this country, have the money to pay our debts, and when the economists are telling us that if we don't pay our debts, there could be an international economic crisis leading to huge amounts of job loss all over the world, not only for the United States—if we surrender to them now on this issue, they will be back. They will be back and they will say: If you don't cut this and don't cut that, we are not going to allow you to pay the debts the United States owes. It will go on and on. Next year they will come back and they may say: Well, we are not going to fund the government unless you end Social Security or unless you cut Medicaid drastically.

This is not the way a government in a democratic, civilized society can operate. We have our disagreements. God only knows we have that. We have debates. But there is a process.

What the Republicans have not yet recovered from is the simple fact that they lost the Presidential election, they do not have control over the Senate, and they only have one body. They think that from controlling one body they have a right to control the U.S. Government. This is not how it works.

I hope that people all over this country, whether they are conservatives or progressives, Democrats or Republicans, will listen to what some of the sensible Republicans are saying. In essence, what they are saying—and I have read many of the quotes from JOHN MCCAIN and others—is this: Yes, we have differences of opinion, and, yes, some of them disagree strongly

with ObamaCare, but there is a process you go through to make those changes. Do not shut down the government, impact the entire economy, throw 800,000 people out of work, and deny services to millions of Americans. That is not the way to run the government in a democratic society.

Let me conclude by hoping very much that the Speaker of the House will recognize that he is the Speaker of the entire House, not only of the Republican Party, and that he will let all of his Members vote on the legislation we passed in the Senate.

Mr. REID. Before the Senator yields the floor, I would ask permission to direct a question to the distinguished Senator from Vermont.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nevada.

Mr. REID. Is the Senator from Vermont aware of the fact that Dr. Francis Collins today announced that scores of people are being turned away today from the National Institutes of Health clinical trials, 30 little children from clinical trials. Is the Senator aware of that?

Mr. SANDERS. I am aware of that.

The point the leader is raising, what the question speaks to is that this is not a game we are playing when we are dealing with whether kids and others get treatment for cancer. What we are dealing with are life-and-death issues. When the government is shut down and agencies such as the National Institutes of Health end cancer research—this is taking life away from people.

Mr. REID. I ask through the Chair, is the Senator aware that this new gambit across the hall in the House of Representatives is only another effort to defund ObamaCare?

Mr. SANDERS. Absolutely. Absolutely.

Let me make a point for the majority leader. Today was the first day people could go onto the exchanges. Maybe the majority leader would like to explain to the American people that, in fact, some of these Web sites actually crashed because so many people came on board.

Mr. REID. In response to my friend from Vermont, I had the good fortune of spending an hour several months ago with one of the founders of Google. He, with a twinkle in his eye—a young man still—and a big smile, talked about when they were trying to get Google started. They couldn't believe the people who wanted information. Their Web sites kept crashing because so many people wanted the information to which they thought they were entitled.

Around America today millions of people, in the first few hours of the opportunity to sign up, rushed and overburdened a number of places—the Web sites. This is good news for America.

I also say that these are the same people—I read a direct quote at an event earlier today. I am sorry I don't have it with me. In 1961 Ronald Reagan talked about Medicare. I am paraphrasing, but this is pretty close. If

they do not stop Medicare, then his children and his children's children will look back at the day when America used to be free.

Can you imagine that?

Mr. SANDERS. What I would say to the majority leader—and I was on the floor the other day reading quotes—when Social Security was first created, we had quotes from Republicans who were talking about the end of life as we know it, slavery coming to America. It is the same thing with Medicare. It is interesting.

I would say to the majority leader that despite all of the anti-Affordable Care Act rhetoric we hear—you would think nobody would be interested in getting into the program—the first day out, over 2 million people went to the Federal Government's Web site. I am not quite sure why our Republican friends think that millions of Americans on the first day should not have the right to take advantage of a program that was passed by Congress.

Mr. REID. I appreciate the advocacy of my friend from Vermont for all Americans. This good man, the chairman of the Veterans' Committee, Senator SANDERS, is like me. I don't have a military record, nor does he, but that doesn't take away from the effort. We try to make sure veterans are taken care of. What this good man has done to protect American veterans already in a short period of time as chairman of this committee is outstanding. It is really remarkable how much he cares. I express my appreciation to the Senator from Vermont.

Mr. SANDERS. I wish the American people also to understand that we are going to win this struggle because of the determination of the majority leader, who is standing for tens of millions of Americans who not only want access to affordable health care but do not want to see our government blackmailed by a small number of rightwing extremists.

I thank the majority leader very much for his comments.

Mr. REID. Madam President, we are going to go out in a few minutes, but this is my message to the House of Representatives, to the Republican leadership in the House of Representatives: Stop the games. The government is shut down. More than 70 percent of our intelligence community has been sent home. The National Institutes of Health has hundreds and hundreds of people home when they should be looking at their microscopes trying to cure diseases in America and around the world. Everyone in the world looks at the National Institutes of Health with jealousy, it is such a remarkably good institution.

The President has said as to these games they are playing now—he sends these little bits and pieces over here—he will veto them. We won't allow them to pass here anyway. We want the government open. If they will pass the legislation to reopen the government, we will then talk about anything they

want to talk about. We will have conferences on anything they want to talk about. And one of the things we would like to have a conference on is Senator MURRAY's budget that we have been trying to get to conference on for more than 6 months.

The American people deserve more than they are getting from the House of Representatives, the so-called people's House.

IRAQI SPECIAL IMMIGRANT VISA PROGRAM

Mr. LEAHY. Madam President, I am proud that the Senate unanimously passed legislation late last night to extend the Iraqi Special Immigrant Visa—SIV—Program. This program offers nothing short of a lifeline for the Iraqi men and women who risked everything supporting the U.S.' mission in Iraq. Despite the fact that there are thousands of Iraqis still waiting for their paperwork to be processed, the program expired last night, and we must take immediate action to renew it. Given all that is on the line, I am hopeful that even in this difficult political climate, the House of Representatives will take up and swiftly pass this bill and we can send it to President Obama for his signature later today.

Congress created the Iraqi SIV Program in 2008 to allow some of the tens of thousands of Iraqis who served alongside U.S. troops the opportunity to seek safety and a new beginning in the United States. They were our translators and our guides. They were a critical resource to our troops, helping them navigate complex cultural, political, and geographic terrain. They literally risked their lives for us. Now, 5 years after the original legislation passed, less than 6,000 of the 25,000 available visas have been distributed, leaving many well-deserving Iraqi allies in danger and American credibility on the line.

As chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee and chairman of the Appropriations Committee's Subcommittee on State Department and Foreign Operations, I worked hard to see that a reauthorization for the Iraqi SIV Program is in the National Defense Authorization Act. Unfortunately, that reauthorization will not pass in time to renew this vital program. We also made significant efforts to include that extension in the continuing resolution passed by the Senate last week, but a congressional stalemate has eroded that path. The only option that remains is for the House to take up and pass the bipartisan stand-alone bill immediately.

I am hopeful that we can do just that. I have joined with Members from both sides of the aisle in the Senate, including Senators SHAHEEN, MCCAIN, GRASSLEY, and GRAHAM, as well Members in the House, to resolve any concerns. We have compromised on the length of the extension and have covered any costs associated with it. Pas-

sage should be quick and straightforward. Lives are on the line. Our word is on the line, and it is time to act.

Among the many lessons of the Vietnam war is that we must not abandon those who risked their lives to help us. We made a commitment, and we must honor it. We must renew this critical program.

100TH ANNIVERSARY OF STARR COMMONWEALTH

Mr. LEVIN. Madam President, it is a great pleasure to join my colleague DEBBIE STABENOW in honoring Starr Commonwealth on a century of distinguished service to children and families across Michigan. Fittingly, they will mark this milestone with a Founder's Day celebration on October 6 in Albion, MI. This impressive community-based organization is, indeed, 100 years young.

"There is no such thing as a bad child." This simple yet profound belief, held fervently by Floyd Starr, the founder of Starr Commonwealth, has served as the guiding principle for everything Starr Commonwealth has accomplished from the very beginning. A century ago, Floyd Starr sought to create a place where troubled youth could find shelter, peace and the assistance they need to grow. He understood then, as we do today, that it is important to ensure that all young people, regardless of their circumstances, have an opportunity to flourish. Today, Starr Commonwealth is stronger than ever, and their strength-based approach to transforming the lives of young people has proven successful time and again.

Situated on 350 acres in Albion, MI, Starr Commonwealth has nurtured an environment steeped in natural beauty to serve as an oasis where troubled youth can begin the process of comprehensive, constructive change. This nonprofit, multiservice organization currently reaches more than 1.5 million people annually, including families across Michigan, around the United States and in more than 60 countries throughout the world. Starr Commonwealth operates dozens of programs with a focus on helping young people reach their full potential. These programs include residential care services, a therapeutic boarding school, community-based and home-based programs, a public access charter school, and an international learning network for professionals working in positive youth development, trauma-informed care and racial healing, among many others.

Organizations such as Starr Commonwealth play an invaluable role in communities across our Nation. They provide young people with the tools they need to succeed and become productive members of society. Helping young people face adversity and overcome challenges in a caring, positive way is a blessing Starr Commonwealth has bestowed not just on the young

they nurture, but on the future of our State.

Success stories can be found in communities across our land. The lives of countless young people have been transformed; their families are healthier; and the communities in which they reside are stronger as a result of Starr Commonwealth's work. Senator STABENOW and I are delighted to congratulate all who have contributed to the success of this fine organization. Our young people, and our State, have brighter futures because Starr Commonwealth is there to help them along the way.

MESSAGES FROM THE HOUSE

At 9:33 a.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mrs. Cole, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bill, without amendment:

S. 1348. An act to reauthorize the Congressional Award Act.

The message also announced that the House has passed the following bill, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 3174. An act to authorize the Secretary of Transportation to obligate funds for emergency relief projects arising from damage caused by severe weather events in 2013, and for other purposes.

The message further announced that the House insists upon its amendment to the amendment of the Senate to the joint resolution (H.J. Res. 59) making continuing appropriations for fiscal year 2014, and for other purposes, and asks a conference with the Senate on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses thereon, and appoints the following as managers on the part of the House:

From the Committee on Appropriations, for consideration of the Senate amendment and the House amendment, and modifications committed to conference: Messrs. ROGERS of Kentucky, FRELINGHUYSEN, CRENSHAW, and CARTER.

For consideration of the Senate amendment and the House amendment, and modifications committed to conference: Messrs. CANTOR, CAMP, RYAN of Wisconsin, and GRAVES of Georgia.

ENROLLED BILL SIGNED

At 12:53 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mrs. Cole, one of its reading clerks, announced that the Speaker has signed the following enrolled bill:

S. 1348. An act to reauthorize the Congressional Award Act.

The enrolled bill was subsequently signed by the President pro tempore (Mr. LEAHY).

ENROLLED BILL PRESENTED

The Secretary of the Senate reported that on today, October 1, 2013, she had presented to the President of the United States the following enrolled bill:

S. 1348. An act to reauthorize the Congressional Award Act.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

The following bills and joint resolutions were introduced, read the first and second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

By Mr. CARDIN (for himself, Mrs. BOXER, Mr. BROWN, Mr. CARPER, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. HARKIN, Mr. HEINRICH, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. KAINE, Mr. LEAHY, Ms. MIKULSKI, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. SCHUMER, Mr. UDALL of New Mexico, and Mr. WARNER):

S. 1567. A bill to provide for the compensation of furloughed Federal employees; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

The following concurrent resolutions and Senate resolutions were read, and referred (or acted upon), as indicated:

By Mr. REID (for himself and Mr. MCCONNELL):

S. Res. 264. A resolution to authorize testimony, documents, and representation in *State of Florida v. Lawrence, Denny, & Scarbrough*; considered and agreed to.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 462

At the request of Mrs. BOXER, the name of the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. MARKEY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 462, a bill to enhance the strategic partnership between the United States and Israel.

S. 653

At the request of Mr. BLUNT, the name of the Senator from Kansas (Mr. ROBERTS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 653, a bill to provide for the establishment of the Special Envoy to Promote Religious Freedom of Religious Minorities in the Near East and South Central Asia.

S. 727

At the request of Mr. MORAN, the names of the Senator from Maine (Ms. COLLINS) and the Senator from Wyoming (Mr. ENZI) were added as cosponsors of S. 727, a bill to improve the examination of depository institutions, and for other purposes.

S. 822

At the request of Mr. LEAHY, the name of the Senator from Ohio (Mr. PORTMAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 822, a bill to protect crime victims' rights, to eliminate the substantial backlog of DNA samples collected from crime scenes and convicted offenders, to improve and expand the DNA testing capacity of Federal, State, and local crime laboratories, to increase research and development of new DNA testing technologies, to develop new training programs regarding the collection and use of DNA evidence, to provide post conviction testing of DNA evidence to exonerate the innocent, to improve the performance of counsel in State capital cases, and for other purposes.

S. 1158

At the request of Mr. ENZI, the name of the Senator from Mississippi (Mr.

COCHRAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1158, a bill to require the Secretary of the Treasury to mint coins commemorating the 100th anniversary of the establishment of the National Park Service, and for other purposes.

S. 1503

At the request of Mr. DURBIN, the names of the Senator from New York (Mr. SCHUMER) and the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. BURR) were added as cosponsors of S. 1503, a bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to increase the preference given, in awarding certain asthma-related grants, to certain States (those allowing trained school personnel to administer epinephrine and meeting other related requirements).

S. 1557

At the request of Mr. CASEY, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Mr. FRANKEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1557, a bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to reauthorize support for graduate medical education programs in children's hospitals.

S. 1561

At the request of Mr. HARKIN, the name of the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. BURR) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1561, a bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to improve provisions relating to the sanctuary system for surplus chimpanzees.

S. 1564

At the request of Mr. BOOZMAN, his name was added as a cosponsor of S. 1564, a bill making continuing appropriations for veterans benefits and services in the event of a Government shutdown.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. CARDIN (for himself, Mrs. BOXER, Mr. BROWN, Mr. CARPER, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. HARKIN, Mr. HEINRICH, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. KAINE, Mr. LEAHY, Ms. MIKULSKI, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. SCHUMER, Mr. UDALL of New Mexico, and Mr. WARNER):

S. 1567. A bill to provide for the compensation of furloughed Federal employees; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I rise to introduce the Federal Employee Retroactive Pay Fairness Act. I am pleased to have Senators BOXER, BROWN, CARPER, FEINSTEIN, HARKIN, HEINRICH, HIRONO, KAINE, LEAHY, MIKULSKI, SANDERS, SCHUMER, UDALL (NM), and WARNER as original co-sponsors. This bill is a companion bill to legislation Representative JIM MORAN introduced in the House of Representatives, H.R. 3223. The bill is simple and straightforward. It requires that all Federal workers furloughed as a result of the lapse in appropriations that began last night at midnight receive their pay retroactively as soon as is practicable. It is the right thing to do. It is the fair

thing to do. Federal workers didn't cause this shutdown. Federal workers don't want this shutdown. They are dedicated public servants who simply want to do their jobs on behalf of the American people. They shouldn't suffer because so-called Tea Party Republicans, mostly in the House of Representatives, suffer from the delusion that shutting down the Federal Government will somehow prevent the Affordable Care Act from being implemented.

As the Congressional Research Service has reported, in "historical practice", Federal workers who have been furloughed as a result of a shutdown have received their pay retroactively "as a result of legislation to that effect". The language in our bill is the language used to provide pay retroactively to workers furloughed in the Newt Gingrich-led shutdowns in 1995 and 1996; that language was contained as part of section 124 of P.L. 104-56 (109 STAT. 553).

Mr. President, Federal workers already have endured a 3-year pay freeze and "contributed" over \$90 billion to deficit reduction. That was before sequestration hit. On top of the pay freeze, hundreds of thousands of Federal workers have been furloughed because of sequestration. Their pay hasn't just been frozen; it has been cut. They have had fewer resources to carry out their missions and administer the programs they are responsible for.

Now, upwards of 800,000 Federal workers are being furloughed, again, and the rest of federal workforce is being compelled to work without pay. And Republicans are threatening that there won't be any retroactive pay. This is happening to hardworking, patriotic public servants, mostly middle class and struggling to get by like so many other Americans. Enough is enough.

Increasingly, Federal workers are asked to do more with less. According to the Office of Management & Budget, the size of the Federal civilian workforce relative to the country's population has declined dramatically over the last several decades. In the 1950s and 1960s, there were, on average, 92 Americans for every Federal worker. In the 1980s and 1990s, there were 106 Americans for every Federal worker. By 2011, the ratio had increased to 145 Americans for every Federal worker.

Since the 1950s and 1960s, the U.S. population has increased by 76 percent and the private sector workforce has surged 133 percent, but the size of the Federal workforce has risen just 11 percent. Relative to the private sector, the Federal workforce is less than half the size it was back in the 1950s and 1960s. Now it just got smaller by another 800,000 workers overnight because of Republican action regarding the fiscal year 2014 continuing resolution.

The picture that emerges is one of a Federal civilian workforce whose size has significantly shrunk compared to the size of the U.S. population it

serves, the private sector workforce, and the magnitude of Federal expenditures. Yet Republicans are intent on making things even more difficult for Federal workers and their families across the United States.

Preventing Federal workers from doing their jobs doesn't just harm Federal workers; it harms all Americans because Federal workers patrol our borders, make sure our air and water are clean and our food and drugs are safe, support our men and women in uniform and care for our wounded warriors, help our manufacturers compete abroad, discover cures for life-threatening diseases, prosecute criminals and terrorists, maintain and protect critical infrastructure, explore the universe, and make sure Social Security, Medicare, and other social safety-net programs are functioning properly.

When Federal workers do their jobs, they are helping each and every American live a safer and more prosperous life. And I would argue that what Federal workers are able to do on behalf of the American people often redounds to the benefit of all humankind, whether we are talking about conducting ground-breaking basic scientific research or establishing the rule of law.

Our tasks here in Congress are simple—not easy, perhaps, but simple: we need to end the shutdown and put federal workers back on the job; we need to raise the debt ceiling so we can continue to pay our bills and maintain the full faith and credit of the U.S. Government; we need to return to regular order around here and negotiate a comprehensive budget deal that spreads the burden of deficit reduction in a fair way; and we need to hold Federal workers and their families harmless after subjecting them to so much harm over the past several weeks and months.

We need to stop demonizing and scape-goating and punishing Federal workers. We need to re-open the government, continue paying our bills, and replace the sequester with a rational budget. One of the greatest attributes of the American character is pragmatism. Unlike what some other Federal workers are actually doing, here in Congress, balancing the budget is not “rocket science”. We know the various options. Former President Lyndon Johnson was fond of quoting the prophet Isaiah: “Come, let us reason together” That is what we need to do. We can acknowledge and respect our differences but at the end of the day, the American people have entrusted us with governing, with being pragmatic. Let us do our job so Federal workers can get back to their jobs.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 264—TO AUTHORIZE TESTIMONY, DOCUMENTS, AND REPRESENTATION IN STATE OF FLORIDA V. LAWRENCE, DENNY, & SCARBROUGH

Mr. REID of Nevada (for himself and Mr. MCCONNELL) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 264

Whereas, in the cases of *State of Florida v. Lawrence*, Case No. 2013-CM-011301, *State of Florida v. Denny*, Case No. 2013-CM-011303, and *State of Florida v. Scarbrough*, Case No. 2013-CM-011311, pending in the Thirteenth Judicial Circuit of Hillsborough County Court in Tampa, Florida, the prosecution has requested the production of documents and testimony from an employee in the office of Senator Marco Rubio;

Whereas, pursuant to sections 703(a) and 704(a)(2) of the Ethics in Government Act of 1978, 2 U.S.C. §§288b(a) and 288c(a)(2), the Senate may direct its counsel to represent an employee of the Senate with respect to any subpoena, order, or request for testimony relating to his official responsibilities;

Whereas, by the privileges of the Senate of the United States and Rule XI of the Standing Rules of the Senate, no evidence under the control or in the possession of the Senate may, by the judicial or administrative process, be taken from such control or possession but by permission of the Senate; and

Whereas, when it appears that evidence under the control or in the possession of the Senate may promote the administration of justice, the Senate will take such action as will promote the ends of justice consistent with the privileges of the Senate: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That Ryan Patmintra, an employee in the Office of Senator Marco Rubio, and any other employee of that office from whom relevant evidence may be sought, are authorized to produce documents and provide testimony in the cases of *State of Florida v. Lawrence*, *Denny*, & *Scarbrough*, except concerning matters for which a privilege should be asserted.

SEC. 2. The Senate Legal Counsel is authorized to represent employees of Senator Rubio's office in connection with the production of evidence authorized in section one of this resolution.

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

COMMITTEE ON BANKING, HOUSING, AND URBAN AFFAIRS

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on October 1, 2013, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing entitled “Housing Finance Reform: Fundamentals of a Functioning Private Label Mortgage Backed Securities Market.”

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources be authorized to meet during

the session of the Senate on October 1, 2013, at 9:30 a.m., in room 366 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Select Committee on Intelligence be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on October 1, 2013, at 2:30 p.m.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

AUTHORIZING SENATE LEGAL COUNSEL

Mr. REID. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to S. Res. 264.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 264) to authorize testimony, documents, and representation in *State of Florida v. Lawrence*, *Denny* & *Scarbrough*.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. REID. Madam President, this resolution concerns a request for testimony, documents, and representation in three related criminal actions pending in Florida State court. In these actions, protesters have been charged with trespassing on the Tampa, FL, office of Senator MARCO RUBIO, and refusing requests by police to leave the premises. The prosecution has sought testimony from an employee of the Senator's Tampa office who had conversations with the protesters on the day in question. Senator RUBIO would like to cooperate by providing relevant testimony and documents from his employee. This resolution would authorize that employee, and any other employee of the Senator's office from whom relevant testimony may be necessary, to testify and produce documents in this action, with representation by the Senate Legal Counsel.

I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and the motions to reconsider be laid upon the table, with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The resolution (S. Res. 264) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in today's RECORD under “Submitted Resolutions.”)

ORDERS FOR WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 2, 2013

Mr. REID. I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until 10:30 a.m., Wednesday, October 2, 2013; that following the prayer and pledge, the morning hour be deemed expired, the Journal of proceedings be approved to

date, and the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day; that following any leader remarks, the Senate be in a period of morning business for debate only until noon, with the time equally divided and controlled between the two leaders or their designees, with Senators per-

mitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 10:30 A.M.
TOMORROW

Mr. REID. If there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask unanimous consent that it adjourn under the previous order.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 6:33 p.m., adjourned until Wednesday, October 2, 2013, at 10:30 a.m.